



Chinese

A Linguistic Introduction

Chaofen Sun

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Chinese: A Linguistic Introduction

Chinese is spoken by more people than any other language in the world, and has a rich social, cultural and historical background. This is a comprehensive guide to the linguistic structure of Chinese, providing an accessible introduction to each of the key areas. It describes the fundamentals of its writing system, its pronunciation and tonal sound system, its morphology (how words are structured), and its syntax (how sentences are formed) – as well as its historical development, and the diverse ways in which it interacts with other languages. Setting the discussion of all aspects of Chinese firmly within the context of the language in use, *Chinese: A Linguistic Introduction* will be of great benefit to learners wishing to extend their knowledge and competence in the language, and their teachers. It will also be a useful starting point for students of linguistics beginning work on the structure of this major world language.

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Preface

Over the past decade, with more and more students thinking of a China-related career, interest in Chinese culture and China's languages has grown rapidly. In the meantime, at Stanford University where I teach Chinese linguistics, the Chinese as a foreign language program has become the second-largest one in terms of the number of students enrolled in different levels of instruction. In writing this book, I hope to systematically introduce English-speaking students to some basic linguistic knowledge, in addition to different socio-cultural aspects of the Chinese languages to meet their diverse interests. I first recognized the need for such an elementary book when I was preparing to teach a new course on Chinese language, culture and society in 1998 and could not find any published work in English specifically dealing with the topic. It so happened that in the summer of 2001 Ms. Kate Brett of Cambridge University Press visited me and, upon hearing of my search for such a book, encouraged me to write one myself. The following year, I submitted a book proposal and was very glad that Cambridge University Press quickly decided to move forward with it.

In the course of writing the manuscript, I have received generous support from my colleagues and friends. In particular I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Dean's office of the School of Humanities and Sciences at Stanford University and Stanford Humanities Center for providing me with a Stanford Humanities Fellowship that has given me a year's time to write up this manuscript. I also want to thank the Stanford Center for East Asian Studies that provided me with an undergraduate research assistantship in the 2004 summer allowing me to work with Andrea Snaveley, who has corrected my English errors and offered many valuable suggestions to make the manuscript more readable to a general audience. In addition, I want to acknowledge my gratitude toward the anonymous Cambridge University Press reviewer for valuable comments and suggestions making me clarify my thinking and correcting many mistakes. I am also grateful to Cambridge

University Press editor, Ms. Helen Barton, for her patience. Finally, I must mention my many students over the years as they are really the reason for me to write this book. In the course of this effort, my knowledge of the field was greatly extended either through our discussion and debate in and out of class or through the research I did on various topics of our common interest.

Of course, all the errors in this book are completely mine.

Major chronological divisions of Chinese history

夏	Xia dynasty – twenty-first to sixteenth centuries BCE
商	Shang dynasty – sixteenth to eleventh centuries BCE
西周	Western Zhou dynasty – eleventh century to 770 BCE
春秋	Spring and Autumn period – 770 to 403 BCE
战国	Warring States period – 403 to 221 BCE
秦	Qin dynasty – 221 to 207 BCE
汉	Han dynasty – 206 BCE to 220 CE
三国	Three Kingdoms period – 220 CE to 265
晋	Jin dynasty – 265 to 420
南北朝	Northern and Southern dynasty – 420 to 589
隋	Sui dynasty – 589 to 618
唐	Tang dynasty – 618 to 907
五代	Five Dynasties period – 907 to 960
北宋	Northern Song dynasty – 960 to 1127
南宋	Southern Song dynasty – 1127 to 1279
辽	Liao dynasty – 916 to 1126
金	Jin dynasty – 1115 to 1234
元	Yuan dynasty – 1279 to 1368
明	Ming dynasty – 1368 to 1644
清	Qing dynasty – 1644 to 1911

Major periods of the Chinese language

Oracle and Bronze inscriptions	sixteenth century to 771 BCE
Old Chinese	771 BCE to 220 CE
Middle Chinese	220 CE to 960
Early Modern Chinese	960 to 1900
Modern Chinese	1900 to present

Introduction

The phonetic transcriptions used in this book for Mandarin data are the officially adopted *hànyǔ pīnyīn* spelling used in China. The data from various Chinese dialects are transcribed in the International Phonetic Alphabet adopted by the International Phonetic Association (see Appendix 1).

1 China and Chinese in the world

For centuries China stood as the most powerful country in Asia with a splendid civilization, outpacing the rest of the world in many ways. With the longest unbroken line of recorded history, its extant literature has lasted for more than three millennia, with a legacy extending back to 1500 BCE and with many outstanding Chinese scholars in science, philosophy, literature, and many other fields that continue to influence the modern world. However, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, China was devastated by a series of foreign invasions, famines, and internal turmoils that prevented it from keeping pace with the rapid developments in science and technology and caused it to lag behind the industrialized world in many aspects. It was not until 1979, when Chinese leaders decided to reopen China's doors to the outside world and to convert its state-planned economy into a market-oriented one, that China's national economy started to develop at one of the world's fastest growth rates. After more than twenty years of sustained development, China is now the fourth-largest trading nation and has the second-largest foreign reserves in the world.¹ Its major trading partners include the United States, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom and many other European Union members. In fact, it has been claimed that, measured on a purchasing-power parity basis, China currently stands as the second-largest economy in the world after the United States.²

As the world is becoming more and more integrated, contacts between China and the rest of the world have also become common. During the last

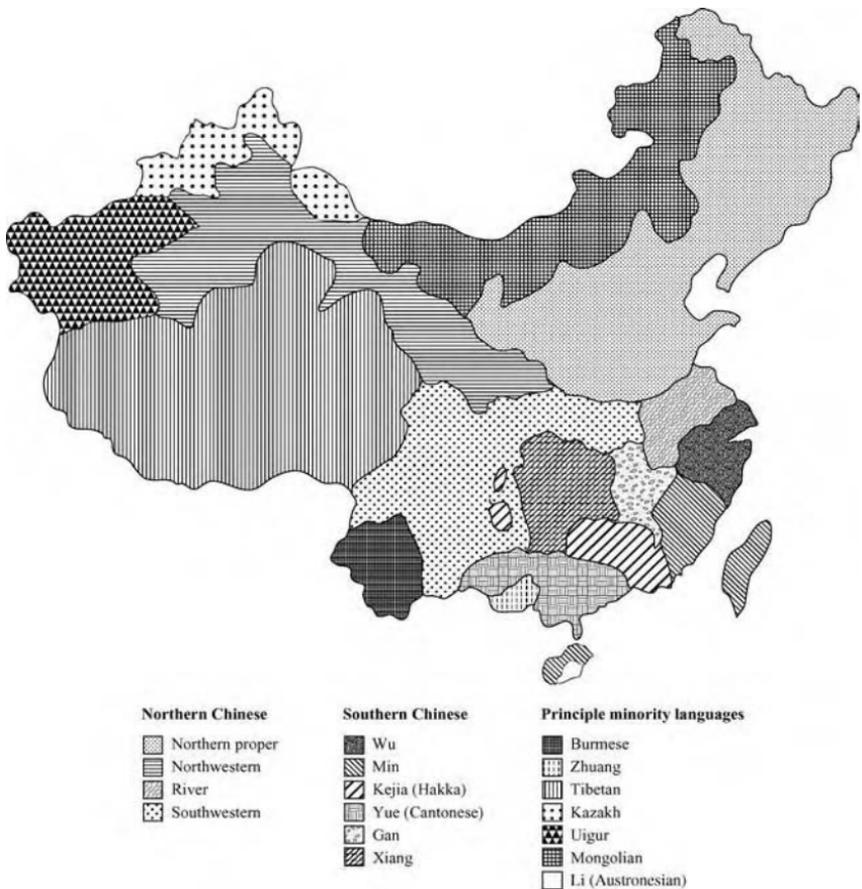
ten years of the twentieth century, China actually sent more international students than any other country in the world to study in the United States. In recent years, many people, particularly overseas Chinese, have moved to live and build up their careers in the People's Republic of China.

The population in China alone accounts for about 1.3 billion,³ approximately one-fifth of the total population of the human race. With such a high percentage of the human race growing up speaking different varieties of the language as their first language, Chinese is indisputably one of the most commonly used languages in the world.

Against such a background, interest in the Chinese language has grown rapidly outside China. Over the last decade, many colleges in the United States saw the number of students enrolled in their Chinese-language classes double, or in some cases triple. It has been reported⁴ that, accompanying China's becoming an official member of the World Trade Organization in 2003, the total number of non-Chinese students who were studying Chinese outside the People's Republic of China reached 25 million. In the same year, there was a great shortage of qualified Chinese-language instructors in the People's Republic to teach some 50,000 foreign students who had traveled to China to study Chinese.

2 China

China is a unitary multinational state which officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups including Han, Zhuang, Uygur, Hui, Yi, Tibetan, Miao, Manchu, Mongol, Buyi, and Korean. Chinese, or *zhōngguó rén* 中國人, is used to refer to all citizens the People's Republic of China regardless of ethnic nationality. Apart from the Han majority, the non-Han Chinese, with a total of more than 96.5 million people, constitute roughly 8% of the total population in the People's Republic. Small as the percentage may appear, they nevertheless inhabit nearly 60% of the land mass of the nation. Nearly all the ethnic groups have spoken languages of their own, and twenty-three have written languages of their own (Map 1 is a linguistic map of China). In the south are the Tai-speaking Zhuang people; in southwest China reside the Tibeto-Burman speakers like Tibetans, Yi, etc; in the northwest corner live the Turkic branch Altaic speakers like Uygurs and Kazakhs; in the north are Altaic speakers like Mongols, Koreans, etc. With a population larger than 15 million, Zhuang is, next to Han, the largest ethnic group in China. However, there are eighteen



Map 1

other ethnic groups with a population larger than a million, including Manchu, Hui, Miao, Uygur, Tibetan, Mongolian, Korean and Kazakh. Another fifteen ethnic groups have a population larger than 100,000. The rest are smaller (Zhou 2003).

The territory of China currently occupies an area of about 9,600,000 square kilometers in East Asia, a country that is geographically almost as big as the United States or only 700,000 square kilometers smaller than the entirety of Europe. After the 1911 Revolution when the Qing Empire fell after a popular revolt led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Party, the new Republic was then known as *zhōnghuá míngguó* 中华民国 "Republic of China." Later,

in 1949, the Nationalists under the leadership of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, lost the civil war and control of most of China to the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong, and the name of the country was changed into *zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó* 中华人民共和国 “the People’s Republic of China.” Nowadays, the Republic of China has jurisdiction over the island of Taiwan where the Nationalist government continued to rule after its defeat in the mainland in 1949. However, in spite of the differences in official names, the Chinese people in modern times most commonly identify China in Chinese with the shortened form *zhōngguó* 中国, that is composed of the first and last syllables of the two official names of modern China.

In Chinese history, the country was most commonly referred to in Chinese by the name of its ruling empire such as *dàqīngguó* 大清国 “the Qing Empire” (1644–1911 CE). Even the English name of the country, i.e., *China*, may be phonetically related to the sounds of the name of the powerful Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE), which defeated various warring states and established the first Chinese empire with a highly centralized government. However, after the 1911 Revolution, the country was commonly referred to as *zhōngguó*. Furthermore, the Chinese people have used *zhōngguó* 中国 to denote the area where the natives accept and carry on the Chinese civilization for a very long time, although sinologists sometimes translate *zhōngguó* into English literally as *Middle Kingdom* or sometimes *Central States*. In isolation, the two syllables, *zhōng* 中 and *guó* 国, that make up the short name actually carry the meanings “middle” or “central” for *zhōng* and “country” or “state” for *guó* separately. But the notion of *Central States* implies multiple entities, whereas *Middle Kingdom* refers to one country. As early as the Chunqiu period (770–476 BCE),⁵ *zhōng-guó*, refers to a geographical area with many warring states and, therefore, *Central States* is an appropriate translation for the land at that time. For example, in (1) *zhōngguó* was already in use referring to an area contrasting with *yídí* 夷狄 “foreign countries” in a document written over two millennia ago.

- (1) 桓公救中国而攘夷狄
 Huán gōng jiù zhōngguó ér rǎng yí-dí (公羊传: 僖公)
 Name duke save central-states and resist foreign-foreign
 “Duke Huan saved the central states and resisted the foreign countries.”

Therefore, at that time, *zhōngguó* was already used as a term to distinguish the states that embraced Chinese civilization from those that did not. However, after all the warring states were unified by the Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE) under one central government, the term *zhōngguó*, from its former sense, a central area occupied by a number of states, naturally developed into a noun for the unified country. This happened as early as the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE). In example (2), *zhōngguó* clearly refers to the entire Han empire. Therefore, it makes sense to translate it as “Middle Kingdom.”

- (2) 天下名山八而三在蛮夷五在中国
 tiān-xià míng shān bā ér sān zài mán-yí
 sky-down noted mountain eight and three in foreign-foreign
 wǔ zài zhōng-guó (史記: 本紀)
 five in central-state
 “There are eight famous mountains in the world. Three are in
 foreign countries, and five in the Middle Kingdom.”

From these examples we can see that the Chinese name for China, *zhōngguó*, originally refers to a number of states situated roughly along the Yellow River in North China that defines the limits of Chinese civilization and later becomes a noun designating the unified empire. In modern times, when serving as a short name for China, the meanings of “central,” or “middle” in this lexical item are completely lost.⁶

3 Chinese

Chinese, as a language name in English, refers to the Sinitic subgroup of Sino-Tibetan languages in Asia. But it can be translated into various Chinese nouns for the language encompassing many different ideas depending on the context. First of all, Chinese can be translated as *zhōngwén* 中文 generally referring to the language. *Zhōngwén* 中文 is also the right term to use for the academic discipline in studying Chinese language and literature, such as *zhōngwénxì* 中文系 for the Chinese department in a university setting. Second, the term *hànyǔ* 汉语 “Han language” is used in the context contrasting the languages spoken by the Han nationality that makes up 92% of the 1.3 billion Chinese citizens of the People’s Republic with all of the non-Han languages

spoken in China and the rest of the world. Therefore, foreign students who are now learning Chinese are said to be learning *hànyǔ* 汉语. Third, as *hànyǔ* is a general term for the languages, many of which are mutually unintelligible among speakers of different varieties of Han language, it by default refers to the standard dialect of the country that is known as *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 literally meaning “common language” in the People’s Republic. *Pǔtōnghuà* is a constructed norm based upon the language, a variety of Northern Chinese, spoken in the capital city, Beijing. Moreover, Chinese corresponds to a number of Chinese equivalents depending on the given speech community. In Singapore, an important Chinese-speaking community, as well as in the other Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, Chinese is known as *huáyǔ* 华语 “Hua-language,” as *Huá* is another Chinese name for the Han-Chinese. In Taiwan, for historical reasons, standard Chinese is known as *guóyǔ* 国语, literally “national language.” Different as *huáyǔ* 华语 and *guóyǔ* 国语 may appear, the standard is practically the same as *pǔtōnghuà*. *Mandarin* referring to Northern Chinese in English originated from the fact that the Mandarin officials of the Qing Empire spoke to each other in that language. Fourth, “Chinese” also refers to different Chinese dialects, or *hànfāngyán* 汉方言, but does not include any of the non-Han-Chinese languages spoken by ethnic minorities in China.

An extraordinary phenomenon for the Han-Chinese is the lack of mutual intelligibility among people within the same ethnic group. A Chinese person from Beijing who has grown up speaking the most prestigious dialect of the nation cannot speak or understand the local languages in the south, or the so-called Southern Chinese dialects, such as those used in the streets of Shanghai or Hong Kong. Traditionally, Han-Chinese is divided into seven major dialect groups, Mandarin (or *beifānghuà* Northern Chinese), Wu, Xiang, Gan, Kejia (Hakka), Yue (Cantonese), and Min.⁷ Among the Han-Chinese, Northern Chinese speakers comprise 70% (840 million), Wu 8.5% (102 million), Yue 5.5% (66 million), Min 4.5% (54 million), Kejia 4% (48 million), Gan 2.5% (30 million), and Xiang 5% (60 million).⁸ In spite of sharing a large number of cognates, or words of common origin, Chinese dialects vary most strikingly in their sound systems. All Chinese dialects have tones with different pitch contours for each syllable (for details see chapter 2). Table 1 shows the tonal variations of different dialects as given in *hànyǔ fāngyǎn zìhuì* “A list of words with dialectal pronunciations” (Chinese Department, Beijing University 1989).

Table 1 *Tonal variation in Chinese dialects. 55, 35, 214, etc. are tonal values. For a more detailed description please refer to section 2.4.*

Dialect	City	Tones (with tonal values)
Mandarin	Beijing	four tones: 55, 35, 214, 51
Wu	Suzhou	seven tones: 44, 24, 52, 412, 31, 4, 23
Xiang	Changsha	six tones: 33, 13, 41, 55, 21, 24
Gan	Nanchang	seven tones: 42, 24, 213, 45, 21, 5, 21
Kejia	Meixian	six tones: 44, 11, 31, 52, 1, 5
Yue	Guangzhou	nine tones: 55, 21, 35, 23, 33, 22, 5, 22, 2
Min	Xiamen	seven tones: 55, 24, 51, 11, 33, 32, 5

Table 2 *Pronunciation of some Chinese cognates in different dialects.*

City	口 "mouth"	金 "gold"	男 "male"	省 "province"
Beijing	kou	jin	nan	sheng
Suzhou	k'ʏ	tɕin	nø	*sən/saŋ
Changsha	kəu	tɕin	lan	sən
Nanchang	k'ieü	tɕin	lan	*sən/saŋ
Meixian	*k'eu/həu	kim	nam	*sən/saŋ
Guangzhou	həu	kəm	nam	ʃaŋ
Xiamen	*k'ɔ/k'au	kim	lam	sɪŋ

* The first of the pair represents literary pronunciation, *wéndú*, and the second colloquial pronunciation, *báidú*.

The examples in Table 2 show the diversified pronunciation of cognates for *mouth*, *gold*, *male*, and *province* in different Chinese dialects (Chinese Department, Beijing University 1989).

The seven major Chinese dialect groups are actually like many European languages that are members of the Indo-European language group but are mutually unintelligible. However, unlike Europeans, the inability to understand each other's speech has not made Chinese speakers feel any less Chinese, regardless of the variety of language they grew up speaking. Norman (1988: 1) observes that:

The explanation is to be found in the profound unity of Chinese culture that has been transmitted in an unbroken line beginning from the third millennium BC and continuing down to the present day. Even in periods of political disunity at various times in the past, the ideal of a single, culturally unified Chinese empire has never been forgotten. The Chinese language, especially in its written form, has always been one of the most powerful symbols of this cultural unity.

Unlike European languages, the writings of which are alphabetical and bear a direct relationship to the speech sounds in the given language, Chinese writing adopts a logographic system with characters that are partially morpho-syllabic (see Chapter 4).⁹ Although Chinese speakers from different parts of the country may not be able to carry out a meaningful conversation in their own spoken language, they can easily communicate in writing, which creates a common, solidifying, and profound cultural bond among all Chinese dialect speakers.

This connection is made possible by the fact that the grammar of written Chinese generally follows the grammar of standard Chinese *pǔtōnghuà* without incorporating into it too many regional dialectal features. All Han-Chinese children, particularly those growing up in dialect-speaking areas, must learn to write in this literary language in school. Fortunately, in spite of some minor structural variations, the syntactic structures in *pǔtōnghuà* and the various dialects do not differ substantially, thus making learning less onerous for dialect-speaking children. Their primary task in learning *pǔtōnghuà* is to a large extent simply to master the sound system of the national standard. For example, other than the differences in speech sounds, the most conspicuous difference between two sentences in *pǔtōnghuà* and Cantonese, or a Yue dialect, is perhaps the perfective marker (glossed as PFV in (3), *le* versus *zo*, that may not share a common origin.

(3) *pǔtōnghuà*: 我买了一本书
 wǒ mǎi le yì-běn shū
 1st buy PFV a-CL book
 “I have bought a book.”

Cantonese: 我买佐一本书
 ŋ o mai zo jat-pun Sy
 I buy PFV a-CL book
 “I have bought a book.”

Of course, these similarities do not mean that learning the grammar of standard Chinese is completely effortless for dialect-speaking Chinese children. Dialectal variations among the Chinese dialects go beyond speech sounds and vocabularies and definitely reach sentence grammar. For example, in (4) the adverb *xiān* “first” goes before the verb in *pǔtōnghuà* but

the adverb *Sin* with a similar function in Cantonese takes the sentence-final position.

- (4) *pǔtōnghuà*: 我先去
 wǒ xiān qù
 I first go
 “I go first.”
- Cantonese: 我行先
 ŋ o haŋ Sin
 I go first
 “I go first.”

It is highly possible for a Cantonese speaker to learn to say something with the correct *pǔtōnghuà* pronunciation, but with the Cantonese sentence grammar like *wǒ qù xiān* “I go first.” In this case, even though the sentence may sound very odd to a Northern Chinese speaker, the chance for her/him to comprehend the sentence is still good. However, in the school setting, the wrong word order in syntax would still be considered incorrect and not tolerated by the teachers. In most cases, children growing up in a Cantonese-speaking area would be taught to avoid speaking *pǔtōnghuà* and writing formally in this kind of ungrammatical manner.

Standard Chinese, or *pǔtōnghuà*, is generally considered to be the most prestigious variety of the Chinese language all over the country, perhaps only with the exception of Hong Kong, which is located in the Yue-speaking area. For example, whereas in the city of Shanghai, which is located in the Wu-speaking area, the language that is most commonly used in schools is *pǔtōnghuà*, it is not so in Hong Kong as its sovereignty was not returned to the Chinese authorities until 1997. During the 150 years of colonial rule under the United Kingdom, English was considered the primary language of the colony even though the majority of the people living in the colony could not speak this language. Compared to Hong Kong, Guangzhou (Canton), another city located in the Yue-speaking area which was never placed under British rule, has a profile in which English is hardly used at all in any sociolinguistic domain. It seems that even though *pǔtōnghuà* is most prestigious in the two Southern-dialect-speaking cities, Shanghai and Guangzhou, English is still the language that enjoys the highest prestige in Hong Kong as English still figures most importantly in legal, governmental, and educational sectors,

Table 3 *A comparison of the languages used in the speech communities in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Guangzhou. This is a translation of Zou and You 's (2001: 91–92) Table 2.1.4. The original is written completely in Chinese. I have made some minor modifications in light of social changes since 1997.*

Domain	Hong Kong	Shanghai	Guangzhou
Family	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Media	Cantonese	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà/Cantonese
Official meetings	Cantonese/English	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà
Official reports	Cantonese/English	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà
Chatting	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Shopping	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Newspapers	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà
Campus language	Cantonese/English	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà/Cantonese
Airports/stations	Cantonese/English	Pǔtōnghuà	Cantonese/Pǔtōnghuà
Court	English	Pǔtōnghuà	Pǔtōnghuà
Police	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Public transport	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Restaurants	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese
Local operas	Cantonese	Shanghainese	Cantonese

a phenomenon that can be considered a colonial legacy. Table 3 is taken with some minor modifications from Zou and You (2001), outlining different functions that standard Chinese, local dialects, and English serve for the 98% of Hong Kong residents who are ethnic Chinese as compared to the Chinese in Shanghai and Guangzhou.

The characterization of the languages used in different social domains also shows that, within the three cities under scrutiny, standard Chinese is most widely used in the city of Shanghai and least used in the city of Hong Kong. As Cantonese is perhaps the most developed variety of Southern dialects, the linguistic situations in the cities located in Southern dialect areas vary between those in Guangzhou and Shanghai.

4 Readership

To a certain extent, this book is shaped by my previous students who were eager to find out how Chinese flourishes within the context of Chinese civilization, how its writing system evolved over time, how it interacts with

the different languages surrounding it, what make up Chinese, what the fundamentals of its grammar are, etc. There are two groups of people to whom this book is addressed. The first group is Chinese-language teachers and specialists in different fields of Chinese studies. There are already a number of textbooks and good descriptions of the Chinese language in English in various areas of Chinese linguistics. However, there is not a book written in English with an overview of the structure of the language at the introductory level for students who are not necessarily linguistic majors but need to have a good knowledge of the language in order to conduct research in a given field. Furthermore, most students who have no previous linguistic background may find many available books either too specialized as an introduction, or too limited in scope of coverage. This then is a book written mainly for English speakers about Chinese as a foreign linguistic system. Various aspects of the language covered in this book are shaped by my experience in teaching such an introductory course at Stanford University. In short, this book should be of interest to students and teachers of Chinese who want to acquire a good knowledge about it in general or simply to be sophisticated learners of the language.

The second group of the intended readership is those who are not professionally involved in Chinese studies but, for the purposes of comparison or broadening their knowledge base, seek a general understanding of the history and linguistic structure of a major language such as Chinese. With these two groups of readers in mind, I do not assume a professional competence in linguistics but describe the structure of the language with a minimum of specialist terminology. Similarly, English-language references will normally be given for recommended further reading, and Chinese sources will be provided primarily as a supplement or when not available in English.

5 Structure and aims

This book provides an introduction to the linguistic structure of Chinese in all its aspects including history, dialects, and sociolinguistics, as well as its sound system, writing, morphology, and syntax. However, this book is not written for specialists in various subfields of Chinese linguistics so they may find the coverage of various topics somewhat cursory. Given the page limit, the focus of the book is on standard Chinese, *pǔtōnghuà*, and the related linguistic

aspects of which non-specialists would like to gain some insight and better understanding. Chapter 1 provides a relevant history of the country and of the formation of the standard language, including language policies, with respect to the writing system or orthography. Chapter 2 deals with the *pǔtōnghuà* sound system. Chapters 3 and 4 consider various word-forming strategies in Chinese. Chapter 5 introduces the development of Chinese script and the internal structure of Chinese characters. Chapter 6 examines the Chinese lexicon with an eye to the cultural underpinnings related to influential philosophy, religion, and commonly held social beliefs. It also discusses borrowings from English, Japanese, and other languages resulting from language contacts. Chapters 7 and 8 deal with Chinese lexical categories, phrase structure rules, and various Chinese constructions a student of Chinese should understand.

FURTHER READING

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NOTES

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2. www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ch.html#Econ
3. United Nations Population Division: <http://esa.un.org/unpp/index.asp?Panel=3>
4. 中国教育报 2002/7/22 "Education in China"
5. Wu, Baotang 1990.
6. Glahn 2000.
7. Yuan, Jiahua 1989.
8. Zhou, Youguang 2003.
9. Chen, Ping 1999.

1 Historical background of the language

1.1 Prehistoric time

Chinese people regularly refer to themselves as descendants of the Yan Emperor 炎帝 *Yándì* and Yellow Emperor 黄帝 *Huángdì* who are legendary personages commonly believed to have lived in the western part of modern-day China about 5,000 years ago. It is said that they resided along a Ji river and a Jiang river, thus some of their direct descendants still bear the family names 姬 *Jī* and 姜 *Jiāng* today. Furthermore, the Yellow Emperor is said to have been a great inventor with many extravagant tales about him. He supposedly drew up the first Chinese calendar and was responsible for many inventions enabling Chinese people to sustain the hardships of life in ancient times. Most important of all, as a charismatic warrior who defeated the surrounding enemies, he is credited with founding the nation from which Chinese civilization emerged.

The first Chinese dynasty, 夏 *xià*, was established in western China near the Yellow River around the twenty-first century BCE. As Xia rhymes with the word *huá* 华, which could mean “flower,” Chinese civilization is also known as “Hua-Xia civilization,” *huá-xià wénmíng*. For this reason, Hua is still used in names for the ethnic group and its language in modern time, such as 华语 *huá-yǔ* for Chinese in Singapore.

Chinese, as a Sinitic group, is most closely related to the Tibeto-Burman languages currently spoken in the areas around the southwestern parts of modern China. It is reasonable to assume that in prehistoric time a branch of proto-Sino-Tibetan-speaking people migrated down from the mountainous regions of central Asia and settled down around the Yellow River, or *Huánghé* 黄河 in Chinese, valley where they cohabited with the indigenous people giving rise to the Chinese civilization. A comparison with some of the basic vocabulary in Chinese and Tibeto-Burman languages yields similarities that

Table 1.1 *Sino-Tibetan comparisons, adapted from Norman 1988: 13, Table 1.2.*

	Putonghua	Cantonese	Middle Chinese	Old Chinese	Written Tibetan	Written Burmese
<i>I</i>	wo	ngo	nguo	ngag	nga	aŋ
<i>three</i>	san	sam	sam	səm	gsum	sum
<i>name</i>	ming	mɪŋ	mjäŋg	mjing	ming	ə-mañ
<i>eye</i>	yan	ŋan	mjuk	mjəkw	mig	myak
<i>fish</i>	yu	jy	ngjwo	ngjag	nya	ŋa
<i>die</i>	si	fei	si:	sjid	shi-ba	se
<i>kill</i>	sha	fat	săt	srat	bsat	sat
<i>poison</i>	du	tuk	duok	dəkw	dug	tok

cannot be an accident. The Middle Chinese, Old Chinese, Written Tibetan (WT), and Written Burmese (WB) data in Table 1.1 are taken from Norman (1987).¹

1.2 Oracle-bone and bronze scripts

The earliest record of written Chinese is inscriptions carved on turtle shells and oxen shoulder blades excavated from the ruins of the Shang dynasty (sixteenth to eleventh centuries BCE) capital at modern Anyang in Henan province. This type of writing is usually called 甲骨文 “oracle-bone script” *jiǎgǔwén*, and it was carved there for the purpose of divination. It was first discovered accidentally in Anyang in 1899 after a Qing-dynasty scholar, Wang Yirong, who was an expert on bronze script, found a strong resemblance between bronze script and the carvings on some “dragon bones” that had supposedly some curative powers and were perhaps given to him as part of a medicinal prescription (Gao 1996: 225–6). Currently, over 100,000 pieces of shells and bones with engraved script have been recovered through excavation in Anyang. A total of about 3,700 different characters have been identified from these artifacts; however, only about 2,000 of them have so far been deciphered (Zou, et al. 1999: 227). Closely related to the oracle-bone script is the bronze script that is carved on the surface of bronze vessels supposedly placed in palaces

and used for sacrificial ceremonies at the times of Shang and Western Zhou dynasties.

1.3 Old Chinese (771 BCE–220 CE)

Old Chinese is thought to be a kind of koine, a common language that was used for communication, for the people from the central states. This linguistic system is also known as *yǎyán*, 雅言 “refined speech.” Traditional Chinese scholars also called the pronunciation of this refined speech *zhèngyīn* “authentic pronunciation.” It probably evolved from the pronunciation of the languages spoken in the Xia and Shang dynasties around what is today Henan province. Evidence of this common language can be seen from a sentence in *The Analects*, (a collection of quotations from Confucius) where it is recorded:

(1.1) 子所雅言，诗书执礼皆雅言也。

zǐ suǒ yǎ yán, shī, shū, zhí lǐ, jiē
 master PRON elegant speak, ode, document, conduct ritual, all
 yǎ yán yě
 elegant speech Part.

“What the Master (Confucius) discussed are the Book of Odes, the Book of History, and the maintenance of propriety. (These) are all refined speech.”

In other words Confucius, a native from the state of Lu (in the modern-day Shandong province), was able to conduct his teaching in a common language *yǎyán* to his 3,000 disciples who hailed from different central states. Thus, even 2,500 years ago there already appeared to be a common language among the people from the central states. The phonological sources from which the Old Chinese (also called Archaic Chinese by some sinologists) sound system is reconstructed include both the rhymes of poems in *The book of Odes* 诗经, which Confucius thought highly of, and the phonetic hints provided by the structure of Chinese characters, particularly through the descriptions in dictionaries such as *Shuōwén Jiězì* 说文解字 compiled by Xu Shen of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE).



Map 2 The Qin Dynasty (221–206 BCE)

However, in spite of the existence of the more prestigious common language such as the refined speech discussed above, in Confucius' time, there was obviously a lack of mutual intelligibility between the native tongues spoken across the central states. Xu Shen observed that the people from the central states spoke a different language, *yányǔ yìshēng* 言语异声, and used a different writing script, *wénzì yìxíng* 文字异形. Emperor Shi Huangdi of the Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE; see Map 2 for a map of the Qin empire), after annexing the central states into one unified Middle Kingdom, authorized his Counselor-in-Chief Li Si to develop a standard script for the empire on the basis of the script used in the former state of Qin. This constitutes the earliest effort on record in Chinese history to standardize the written language.

Although the Qin dynasty is credited with the enormous accomplishment of forming a highly centralized empire and making itself known in the West, it is

the Han Empire, ruling the land after Qin for more than 400 years, that gave its name to the people and the language in China. Nearly two millennia after its fall, about 92% of the Chinese in China nowadays still refer to themselves as Han people and their language as the Han language. During the Han dynasty, the common language, a variety of the language functioning like the refined speech in the Qin dynasty, was called *tōngyǔ*, 通语.

During the second half of the Han dynasty, Buddhism was transmitted into the empire from India. As the religion spread, Buddhist scriptures were translated into Chinese, some of which have provided most useful texts for modern scholars to investigate elements of the spoken language of Middle Chinese as they were written in a vernacular style that clearly diverges from the Classical style prevalent in the canonical Confucian texts.

1.4 Middle Chinese (220 CE to 960)

After the fall of the Han Empire (see Map 3) in the third century, China was ravaged by constant civil wars and internal strife until the Sui dynasty (589–618) reestablished an empire somewhat comparable to Han in terms of its territorial control. At the same time large-scale immigration had brought a great number of speakers of the common language in central China, including some wealthy and noble families, to the coast around the area of present-day Nanjing. As a result the language spoken there became very similar to that of the common language spoken in central China. It was also during the Sui dynasty that an imperial examination system known as *kējǔ* 科举 was established to recruit government officials from among the brightest young scholars in the country. In this kind of examination, which was practiced for more than a millennium until the beginning of the last century, a test-taker had to demonstrate his ability to compose poems by following the strictly regulated rhyming schemes extremely popular among men of letters in Sui and Tang times. The sound system in the rhyme book *Qièyùn* 切韵, published under the name of Lu Fayan (601 CE) soon after the Sui dynasty founded its empire, was considered the accepted norm. This book divides Chinese syllables, represented by characters into various rhyming categories, according to their tonal qualities. Rhyme books like *Qièyùn* also explained the meanings and formation of the characters, thus functioning



Map 3 The Han Dynasty (206 BCE–CE 220)

as dictionaries that could be used by scholars from different regions of the empire.

1.5 Early modern Chinese (960 to 1900)

After the fall of the Tang dynasty in CE 907, with the exception of the 160 years of the Northern Song dynasty and the 280 years of the Ming dynasty, the vast area north of the Yangtze River, or the former central states, was ruled by Altaic speakers for more than 500 years. Two rhyme books, *Zhōngyuán Yīnyùn* 中原音韻 and *Hóngwǔ zhèngyùn* 洪武正韻, after the Tang dynasty are of particular importance, as for many scholars they constitute the basis for

the reconstruction of the early modern Chinese sound system. *Zhōngyuán Yīnyùn* published during the time of the Yuan dynasty shows that, in the spoken language of the capital city of Beijing, the Middle Chinese tonal category, *rùshēng* “entering tone” or syllables that end with a stop sound, was lost after several hundred years of rule by the Altaic speakers.

Nevertheless, the Mongolian emperors ruled the whole of China only for eighty-nine years before the Ming dynasty reestablished Han-Chinese rule over the entire country with the city of Nanjing along the Yangtze River as its capital. For this reason, the Nanjing 南京 variety of Han-Chinese was considered the most prestigious among different varieties of the Chinese language at the time, as was observed by sixteenth-to-seventeenth-century Italian missionaries. These missionaries not only left us with the earliest Chinese texts in which Roman letters were employed to annotate Chinese pronunciation but also left us with some detailed descriptions of the sociolinguistic situation of China as they saw it (South Coblin 1998). In the rhyme book *Hóngwǔ zhèngyùn* published during the Han-Chinese Ming dynasty (1368–1644) the entering tone reappeared. As a matter of fact, other than the northern modern Chinese, many regional Chinese dialects today still retain syllables with stop endings. The Beijing dialect actually would not enjoy its most prestigious status until the nineteenth century (Chen 1999), more than a hundred years after the Manchu Qing emperors (1644–1911) began governing the empire from its capital, Beijing.

However, no serious language planning at the national level occurred until the late nineteenth century. After repeated military defeats by foreign powers and partially inspired by the remarkable success of neighboring Japan in transforming its nation into a major power in the world after its Meiji Restoration (1868), the Chinese imperial government and the general public started to undertake language planning, attempting to construct a national language as part of efforts to modernize China. During the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), in spite of the fact that Beijing dialect was the de facto official language used in the court and known as *guānhuà* “Mandarin,” China, as a nation, could not agree upon a norm to be the nation’s standard language. The Nanjing, Wuhan, Shanghai, and Beijing dialects were all among those proposed by various scholars to be adopted as the national language, *guóyǔ* 国语. Furthermore, proposals were also made to adopt a phonetic-spelling system as an alternative to the traditional character-based script.

1.6 Modern Chinese (1900–present)

However in 1911, before the Qing Imperial government had a chance to choose, or to decide upon, a linguistic norm for the nation, the Empire fell after a number of armed uprisings led by the Nationalist Party. Planning to adopt a national language for the newly founded Republic of China was resumed almost immediately after the revolution. In 1913, a commission consisting of eighty-eight scholars with expertise in traditional phonology and philology, representing all provinces of the country, met in Beijing for more than a month. Ultimately, the Commission announced the official pronunciation of more than 6,500 Chinese characters and its chosen alphabet for phonetic annotation *zhùyīn zìmǔ* 注音字母. But this announcement did not truly affect the general public until 1919 when the *Guóyīn zìdiǎn* “Dictionary of national pronunciation” was officially published.

Almost immediately the standard pronunciation came under attack for its artificiality. For instance, the entering tone with stop endings was treated, in accord with traditional rhyme books, as the standard for distinctive phonetic values of many syllables represented by characters. However, practically no native speakers in northern China, i.e., 70% of the Han-Chinese, knew how to pronounce these syllables because syllables with stop endings did not exist in their daily speech. In addition, the native speakers of southern dialects, who did regularly speak with stop endings in their native tongues, did not know how to speak the standard pronunciation with stop endings because the dictionary published by the government only indicated each character’s tonal category without specifying how exactly they should be spoken. In order to rescue this version of the national language, Yuen Ren Chao, an American-trained, skillful phonetician, and Pu Wang were entrusted with the task of creating a standard pronunciation for the nation. The two succeeded in their task by following the Beijing dialect and inventing ways to pronounce all the non-existent stop endings for Mandarin. Even though gramophone records with the new standard pronunciation were distributed to the entire nation along with the Chinese textbooks, ordinary Chinese speakers, most importantly elementary schoolteachers, were still at a loss when faced with sounds that did not exist in their everyday speech. The fact of the matter was that, in spite of all the effort, citizens of the Republic simply did not know how to speak their national language. Finally, in 1932, in order to end this

national dilemma, the government abandoned the artificial standard pronunciation by adopting the Beijing dialect as the national language and published a new *Guóyǐn chángyòng zìhùì* “A glossary of frequently used characters in national pronunciation” with a list of 12,219 Chinese characters. In this dictionary, the 1913 phonetic annotation was renamed as *zhùyīn fúhào* 注音符号 “sound-annotating symbols.” From then on, the entering tones, together with all the sounds non-existent in the Beijing dialect, were formally removed from the standard pronunciation. Accompanying these innovations, a romanized script, designed by Yuen Ren Chao in 1926 and known as *guóyǔ luómǎzì* “romanized spelling for the national language,” was distributed by the government. Therefore, after 1932, with the newly adopted standard pronunciation, the Ministry of Education of the Republic of China was able to vigorously promote the use of the national language in elementary schools, and the nation as a whole was able to rid itself of the traditional rhyme books that represented an outdated norm no longer practical in modern time.

After 1949, when the Chinese Communist Party led by Mao Zedong won a number of decisive victories in the battlefields and assumed power in Beijing, the same standard pronunciation system was advocated by the government of the People’s Republic of China. In 1955, two national conferences convened in Beijing under the sponsorship of the central government decided on the standardization of the script and spoken language for the nation. The new Chinese government, as compared to its predecessors, played a much more active role in language planning. First of all, the Chinese government replaced the name of *guóyǔ* 国语 “national language” with *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 “common speech (language)” in order to highlight political equality among all ethnic groups and their languages (Zhou 2003). The official definition of *pǔtōnghuà* is: “the standard form of Modern Chinese with the Beijing phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and Northern dialects as its base dialects, and looking to exemplary modern works in *báihuà* ‘vernacular literary language’ for its grammatical norms” (Chen 1999: 24). Second, as a result of the 1955 conferences, a newly designed phonetic scheme to facilitate the promulgation of *pǔtōnghuà* was adopted by the People’s Republic of China in 1958. Such a scheme is a romanized system called *hànyǔ pīnyīn fāngàn* “Chinese spelling system,” with *hànyǔ pīnyīn*, or *pīnyīn*, for short. The symbols in Table 1.2 and Table 1.3 are the phonetic symbols in the order of *zhùyīn fúhào* “sound-annotating symbols” adopted in the 1930s, *hànyǔ*

Table 1.2 *Initials in pǔtōnghuà. Phonetic transcriptions in parentheses.*

Labials	ㄅ [p]	ㄆ [p ^h]	ㄇ [m]	ㄈ [f]
Alveolars	ㄉ [t]	ㄊ [t ^h]	ㄋ [n]	ㄌ [l]
Sibilants	ㄗ [ts]	ㄘ [ts ^h]	ㄝ [s]	
Palatals	ㄐ [tʃ]	ㄑ [tʃ ^h]	ㄒ [ç]	
Retroflexes	ㄓ zh [tʂ]	ㄔ ch [tʂ ^h]	ㄕ sh [ʃ]	ㄖ [ʒ]
Velars	ㄍ [k]	ㄎ [k ^h]	ㄏ [h]	

Table 1.3 *Finals in pǔtōnghuà. Phonetic transcriptions given in parentheses.*

ㄚ [a]	ㄛ o [o]	ㄜ e [ə]	ㄝ (-i-)e [ɛ]
ㄝ er [ər]	ㄞ i [i]	ㄟ u [u]	ㄞ ü [y]
ㄟ ai [ai]	ㄟ ei [ei]	ㄟ ao [au]	ㄟ ou [ou]
ㄟ an [an]	ㄟ en [ən]	ㄟ ang [aŋ]	ㄟ eng [əŋ]

pīnyīn “Chinese spelling system,” with the International Phonetic Alphabet in square parentheses.

It is necessary to note, however, that the *hànyǔ pīnyīn* “Chinese spelling system” is currently not used in place of Chinese writing in China. Instead, it is a romanized system functioning to annotate standard Chinese pronunciation with Roman letters.

Since 1958, the *pīnyīn* system has become very useful for foreigners to learn to speak Chinese and it is now most widely adopted by teachers instructing foreign students in Chinese. The success of *pīnyīn* overseas is partially because of its similarities with English letters that make it much easier for students who already know English not only to commit the Chinese phonetic symbols to memory, but also to type Chinese text into English-enabled computers.

The *zhùyīn fúhào* system is still commonly used in Taiwan to annotate Chinese sounds. Although the government in Taiwan has announced a succession of romanized systems to denote Chinese sounds, they have not yet met with much success. In 1999, the Taiwanese government announced the adoption of *hànyǔ pīnyīn* as the official spelling system for street and place names on the island, but the law was repealed in the following year after the Democratic Progressive Party took power. Moreover, in 2002, Taiwan’s

Language Promotion Committee under the Ministry of Education decided to promote a *hànyǔ pīnyīn* based *Tōngyòng* 通用 “commonly used” *pīnyīn* scheme. However, this system is still being debated on the island as the *hànyǔ pīnyīn* system has already been adopted by most international organizations to denote Chinese names. Furthermore, in 1998, the Library of Congress in the United States announced romanization guidelines in cataloguing Chinese materials through designating Chinese in *hànyǔ pīnyīn* spelling without the tone marks. For the lack of empty space between words, the guidelines also decided to separate, or to place an empty space between, Chinese syllables (not including geographical and personal names) instead of following the established *hànyǔ pīnyīn* practice in China to separate not syllables but rather words. Given the popularity of the *hànyǔ pīnyīn* system, it is, then, not very clear how much more successful than its predecessors the newly adopted *Tōngyòng pīnyīn* system in Taiwan will be.

1.7 Modern Chinese grammar and its lexicon

We noted above that Northern dialects are the basis for *pǔtōnghuà*'s spoken norm and exemplary modern works in *báihuà* 白话 “vernacular literary language” for its grammatical norms. However, such a policy did not come as easily as it might appear. Traditionally, the vernacular literary language, in spite of its immense popularity, was looked down upon by the upper sectors of the society. Whereas the vernacular language functioned to serve the low-culture needs for mass consumption, such as religious texts, folklore and plays, *wényán* 文言 “literary language” was the only acceptable style in the previous imperial examinations and typical of the canonical Confucius texts. The language of *wényán* that may be characteristic of some form of Old Chinese (before 200 CE) is very detached from the spoken language of the Chinese people in subsequent times throughout history in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and lexicon. The endurance of such an artificial written language as the only acceptable formal language for such a long time is partially due to the logographic nature of the Chinese writing system which is independent from the actual speech sounds of different times. Soon after the 1911 Revolution that overthrew the Qing dynasty, a so-called New Cultural Movement swept across the country and fundamentally changed the lives of all sectors of Chinese society. Led by a group of reform-minded, westernized scholars

like Chen Duxiu, Fu Sinian, Hu Shi, Liu Bannong, Lu Xun and Qian Xuantong, these young Chinese intellectuals identified three major themes for the movement in forging a new Chinese culture: literary revolution, science and democracy. It was their hope that these ideals would be more in harmony with the contemporary era and the lives of the common people. They were highly critical of many traditional values and blamed them for a large proportion of the failings of the nation. For example, in an open letter to Professor Chen Duxiu who was editor of a highly influential journal of the time, entitled *Xīn Qīngnián* 新青年 “New Youth,”² Qian Xuantong, an influential professor of Chinese in Beijing Normal University, advocated the abolition of Chinese in order to make the Chinese people into “a totally new and civilized, twentieth-century-minded people.” He believed that China should adopt Esperanto to be the official language of the nation (Ramsey 1987: 1). Obviously, few people, even among the most radical reformers, were willing to go as far as replacing Chinese completely with an artificial language. However, one of the most significant outcomes of the New Cultural Movement was the replacement of *wényán* “the literary language” with *báihuà* “the vernacular literary language” as the standard written language of the nation. Hu Shi, an important Chinese scholar who was educated in Cornell and Columbia Universities in the United States, argued, citing Dante, Chaucer, and Wycliff in the European tradition, that a new Chinese language could only come from great literature. Thus, he argued that the national language should be modeled after the type of language found in most of the acclaimed traditional fictions which emerged during and after the Ming dynasty. A more radical branch of the reformers represented by Qu Qiubai and Chen Wangdao advocated a totally new *báihuà* that should be what they called *dàzhòngyǔ* 大众语 “language of the masses,” which would be a language that was actually spoken by ordinary people and understood by them. In spite of the disagreements, many famous Chinese writers such as Lu Xun, Mao Dun, Xu Zhimo, and Yu Dafu, who emerged during and after the New Cultural Movement, all published their writings primarily in the vernacular language with some grammatical forms and lexical items characteristic of the dialects they grew up speaking. After the 1930s, this kind of genre gradually became an acceptable writing style to the general public.

Furthermore, the *pǔtōnghuà* pronunciation of various dialectal vocabularies as given in *Xiàndài hànyǔ cídiǎn* 现代汉语词典 “A Dictionary of Modern

Chinese” (published by the Institute of Linguistics of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences) follow their cognates’ pronunciation in Beijing dialect. For example, in Shanghai dialect, the word 瘡三 for *pauper* is realized as [p^hieʔse]. Interestingly, this word is known all over the country because of the nation’s fascination with life in the metropolis of Shanghai as vividly described in fiction and movies produced after the 1920s in Shanghai. However, Beijing dialect does not have syllables ending with a stop sound like [ʔ] or a syllable with a mid vowel like [e] following a sibilant [s]. These sounds, or combinations of them, which do not exist in Beijing dialect, are then replaced in the standard pronunciation by allowable sounds, or combinations of them, in Beijing dialect for such words. Therefore, in *pǔtōnghuà*, the Shanghainese word for *pauper* is realized as *biēsān* as is indicated in the authoritative *Xiàndài hànǚ cídiǎn*. Still another example can be the word [lɔŋdaŋ] 弄堂 for neighborhood in Shanghai that has gained national recognition as well. But in the languages of north China, there is virtually no voiced stop. Moreover, it is not even the right word in the languages of north China when referring to *neighborhood*. So its *pǔtōnghuà* rendition given in *Xiàndài hànǚ cídiǎn* is *lòngtáng*, the way it can be easily pronounced in Beijing dialect referring to neighborhoods in Shanghai.

The general dissatisfaction with the Chinese language among intellectuals and the fascination with the technologically more advanced West also led to some linguistic changes that can be called Europeanization of the language. For instance, in terms of pronunciation, the Chinese third-person pronoun is an invariable string *tā*. Since the New Cultural Movement, three Chinese characters have been invented in written Chinese and have since become formally recognized pronouns to distinguish between genders in written language. These different characters are 他 “human and male,” 她 “human and female,” and 它 “non-human,” in spite of the fact that in reality they are all pronounced in exactly the same way. It has also been noted that Chinese syntax, to a certain extent, has also been influenced by Western languages such as the extensive use of relative clauses, and passive constructions, in modern Chinese (Li and Thompson 1981).

After nearly a hundred years of debate and effort in standardizing Chinese, considerable progress has been made with respect to the pronunciation and the lexicon of Chinese in the People’s Republic of China. After nearly fifty years of promoting *pǔtōnghuà* in the country, it is now the language of instruction

and campus activities in all schools across the nation, with perhaps the exception of some remote areas and Hong Kong where teaching in elementary schools is still conducted primarily in local dialects. According to Chen (1999), in 1984 90% of the population in China could understand *pǔtōnghuà*, and 50% of the population could speak it.

In 1996, *guójiā jìshù jiāndūjú* 国家技术监督局 “the National Bureau on Technical Supervision” announced and put into practice *hànyǔ pīnyīn zhèngcífǎ jīběn guīzé* “basic rules for *hànyǔ pīnyīn* orthography.” For example, these rules required that in spelling out a Chinese name, the given name and family name of a person are required to be separated, such as Lu Xun and Mao Zedong. On the other hand, these rules designated that non-Chinese names should be spelled according to the original language such as Karl Marx or George Washington. However, special nouns that have commonly known Chinese versions should be spelled according to Chinese such as *Yīngguó* 英国 for England and *Měiguó* 美国 for the United States of America. Although different opinions may still exist as to the plausibility of some of these rules even among the intellectual elite in China, the original regulations that were officially announced by the government in 1988 are currently still in effect. On October 31, 2000, the President of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Jiang Zemin, also signed into law *zhōnghuá rénmín gònghéguó tōngyòng yǔyán wénzìfǎ* “Bill on the common language and orthography of the People’s Republic of China,” reaffirming the official status of *pǔtōnghuà* and its standard orthography.

1.8 Simplification of Chinese script

A common script is perhaps the most important means to convey ideas and laws to every corner of a country where people speak mutually unintelligible regional languages. However, the complexity of Chinese writing made the language undoubtedly difficult to learn. A nineteenth-century scholar, Lu, observed in 1892:

I believe that the strength and prosperity of the country depends upon the physical sciences, which can grow and flourish only if all people – men and women, young and old – are eager to learn and sagacious. If they are to be eager to learn and sagacious, then the script needs to be phonetized in such a way that, after they have acquired the alphabet and the spelling, they will know how to read without further instruction. It also

depends upon speech and writing being the same so that what is said by the mouth will be understood by the mind. Furthermore, it depends upon having a simple script that is easy to learn and write. As a result, this will save more than ten years. If all that time is applied to the study of mathematics, physical sciences, chemistry, and other practical studies, how can there be any fear that our country will not be rich and strong? (quoted in Chen 1999: 165)

In line with the political needs of the empires and the technological developments relating to writing, different scripts have been prevalent at different times. After the fall of the Qing dynasty, Chinese reformers repeatedly advocated the replacement of the Chinese script with an alphabet that writes down what one says phonetically. Mao Zedong, a charismatic leader and chairman of the Chinese Communist Party for more than thirty years, was originally one of those who had such a conviction. He was reported to have told an American journalist, Edgar Snow, in 1936 that latinization was a good instrument with which to overcome illiteracy and that sooner or later the Chinese people would have to abandon characters altogether in order to create a new social culture in which the masses could participate fully (DeFrancis 1984). A less radical proposal that would involve retention of the characters was presented by the American-trained philosopher Hu Shi (Chinese Ambassador to the United States during World War II). Although he was also convinced that China would ultimately have to adopt an alphabetic writing system in the future, he, at the same time, believed that the large number of monosyllables in the literary language, or *wényán*, made it difficult to change Chinese writing over to an alphabetic script without going through an intermediate stage of *báihuà* writing, a genre characteristic of vernacular Chinese in the best Chinese fiction (DeFrancis 1984).

In this national debate, many reformers concurred that as a first step toward the goal of latinization of the Chinese script, it was necessary to simplify the logographic, or non-alphabetic, writing first. In the 1930s the government officially started the simplification of Chinese script. In August 1935 the Nationalist government in Nanjing officially announced a list of 324 simplified characters, known as “The First Set of Simplified Characters.” Three principles were adopted in so doing: (1) adopt existing ones and do not create new ones; (2) select those that circulate relatively widely in society; (3) do not simplify characters that originally did not have too many strokes. However, the list was not embraced by many conservatives, especially many influential

bureaucrats within the government's own hierarchies, and was abolished only a few months after its announcement.

The movement to simplify Chinese script experienced a large advancement after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. Currently there are about 56,000 Chinese words,³ many of which are variant forms of a common morpheme. In the early 1950s, to facilitate the literacy movement, over 1,000 variant forms, or characters, were officially eliminated from standard usage. A Committee on Script Reform was set up in 1952 to formulate some principles for simplifying Chinese characters. The goal was to reduce the number of strokes for the most commonly used characters. In 1956, the Scheme of Simplifying Chinese Characters was promulgated with 515 simplified characters and 54 simplified radicals. Some of the strategies include:

- a. to adopt a simpler original form by dropping a later added radical such as 云 for 雲 “cloud”
- b. to adopt a simpler popular form such as 万 for 萬 “10,000”
- c. to adopt a simpler form from cursive script such as 书 for 書
- d. to create a new simpler character such as 卫 for 衛.

The specific methods take account of omission 号 for 號, shape reform 华 for 華, substitution by a homonym 才 for 纜, change of a component part 说 for 說, etc. After continuous effort, in 1964, a General List of Simplified Characters was promulgated including 2,235 characters that make up roughly 90% of the characters used in modern Chinese publications (Zhou 2003). Since then, Singapore has also adopted a simplified character set as its Chinese orthography, although Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to use the traditional, unsimplified script for cultural and political reasons.

1.9 Formation of Chinese dialects

Chinese dialects formed as a result of waves of migration by the Han-Chinese moving out of the Yellow River area, or the former central states, first to southern China, and later to southwestern China, at various times over the last two millennia. The Chinese believe that they speak dialects of a single language mostly because of the political institution of the nation and a cultural heritage that they have shared for such a long time throughout history. Just as the mighty Yellow River flows down from the Loess Plateau in northwestern China, the earliest Chinese settlers moved down the hilly west and started

an agricultural civilization in the fertile land along the middle and, later the lower, reach of the Yellow River. Whenever the central states were suffering from floods or civil wars, waves of migrants started to move elsewhere.

1.9.1 Northern Chinese (Mandarin)

The plethora of linguistic diversity of Chinese languages in the south and one unified Mandarin in the north might be related to the geographical characteristics of China's north and south. "Mandarin dialects," (hereafter, Northern Chinese or Northern dialects) are spread across the Yellow Plain and the Loess Plateau which has a flat terrain that promotes travel and, consequently, easy contact among the people there. Ramsey (1987: 22) observes that "[t]his remarkable linguistic difference between a unified North and a fragmented South is a measure of how much life and society have been affected by geography." As a result of this geography, a more uniform Northern Chinese area is created with mutually intelligible dialects. In contrast, mutually unintelligible dialects are spoken in the areas south of the Yangtze River because people there were barricaded by mountains and rivers highly unfriendly to traveling in pre-modern times.

The Northern dialects, with nearly 900 million speakers, are commonly subdivided into four major varieties: Northwestern, Northern proper, River, and Southwestern. The Northwestern variety refers to the dialects spoken around the Loess Plateau region with the ancient capital city Xi'an as its center. The Northern proper variety is spoken in the areas such as Hebei province, Shandong province, and provinces in the northeast (Manchuria). This variety constitutes the basis of the standard dialect in modern China. The language was formed through large-scale immigration of the people residing in this area over the last several hundred years. People living in northern China started to move to northeast China *dōngběi* 东北, formerly known as Manchuria, after the Qing emperors lifted, in the eighteenth century, the imperial rule prohibiting Han-Chinese from migrating to the sacred land where the Manchu originally lived. Therefore, Northeastern dialects bear a strong resemblance to other Northern dialects as most migrants settling there originally moved from the Northern dialect area. The River variety spoken in the region north of the Yangtze River around the city of Nanjing was once considered the most prestigious dialect of the nation during and after the Ming dynasty. The

Southwestern variety developed out of several waves of migrants settling in the provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, and Guizhou from central China after the Ming dynasty. Many of the rebels, after losing in the battlefields to the victors in central China, found these isolated areas easy refuge from the ultimate defeat. As a result of frequent military action in these places, the native population was drastically reduced there. During the late eighteenth century the Qing emperors dispatched troops to settle in these remote areas permanently with their families and encouraged large-scale immigration from Hubei and Hunan provinces to reclaim the land in southwestern China. Consequently, the Southwestern variety in many ways resembles the language spoken in Hubei province. Northern Chinese typically has fewer tones than Chinese dialects in the south. However, the most remarkable feature distinguishing Northern Chinese from the mutually unintelligible Southern Chinese dialects is perhaps the lack of stop endings that are prevalent in many Southern dialects like Wu, Yue, and Min.

1.9.2 Southern dialects

Traditionally six major Southern dialects are recognized. They are Wu, Xiang, Min, Yue, Gan, and Kejia (Hakka). The Wu 吴 dialects, with over 80 million speakers, are prevalent in the coastal regions and the Yangtze River delta around the city of Shanghai. It was reported in *Shiji* 史记: 吴太伯世家⁴ “Family of Duke Wu” that a sector of the population migrated to the region after a split in a noble family who lived near the Wei River (in the *central states*) during the Spring and Autumn period (770–403 BCE) and established the state *Wu*, which gives its name to the dialect group. The language spoken by this group of migrants may constitute the origin of the modern Wu dialects which have seven (Suzhou) to eight tones (Wenzhou). This dialect group, unlike most of the other Chinese dialects, retains the voiced and voiceless stop contrast in its spoken language.

The Xiang 湘 dialect, spoken mostly in the modern Hunan province, is probably a modified variety of the currently extinct Chu 楚 language which flourished during the Warring States period (430–221 BCE). This dialect resembles Northern Chinese a great deal because of its geographical affinity. There are six different tones in the Xiang dialect (also known as New Xiang) as it is spoken in Changsha 长沙, the capital city of Hunan province (Yuan

1989). The so-called Old Xiang (a modern dialect group) spoken in the city of Shuangfeng, unlike the New Xiang in Changsha, retains the Middle Chinese voiced and voiceless stop contrast and has five tones.

The Yue 粵 dialects are spoken in Guangdong province and in the Guangxi Autonomous Region in southern China. The modern Yue dialects are believed (Zhou 1991) to be a language that can be traced back to the language spoken by the 500,000 troops dispatched by Qin Shihuang (246–209 BCE) to settle along the south China coast in order to prevent the possible insurrection of the aboriginal people residing there. As compared to other major Southern dialect groups, Yue speakers have developed a stronger group identity associated with the language and consider the most prestigious variety of Yue to be spoken in the capital city of Guangdong province, Guangzhou. In the Ming dynasty, Guangzhou was among the earliest port cities to start to trade with foreign merchants arriving from overseas by ships and, therefore, was named by the European merchants as *Canton*. (For this reason, in English Yue dialect is popularly known as Cantonese.) In order to represent colloquial Cantonese, non-traditional characters that are non-existent in standard Chinese script were created and commonly used in Guangzhou and Hong Kong. No other Chinese dialect has developed to such a degree of sophistication.

Yue-speakers traditionally call themselves *táng-rén* “Tang people” after the powerful Tang dynasty (618–907), their language *táng-huà* 唐话 “Tang speech,” their clothes *táng-zhuāng* 唐装 “Tang clothes,” and even all of China *táng-shān* 唐山 “Tang mountain.” The earliest Chinese immigrants to Europe and North America in modern times also happened to be largely from the Yue-speaking area. As a result, in many overseas “Chinatowns,” such as the one in San Francisco, for a very long time the de facto Chinese spoken there has been Cantonese rather than the national language in China. Interestingly, all of the “Chinatowns” in Europe and America are commonly referred to in Chinese as *táng-rén-jīe* 唐人街 “Tang people street,” referencing the Cantonese tradition.

The Min 闽 dialects refer to the languages spoken in Fujian province. This region became an administrative county for the first time during the Han Empire (BCE 206–220 CE). In subsequent times, large-scale migration to the region has occurred both by seas and by land, as many people were forced to find a place to flee the political chaos caused by incessant war in north China. During Western Jin (CE 265–420), thirteen counties were established along

the coast and near the mountainous areas of Fujian province. The language spoken in these counties at that time may be the earliest form of the current Min dialects. Large-scale immigration during the last several hundred years from the area around the cities of Quanzhou and Xiamen (Amoy) have also placed the Southern Min speakers in Taiwan and Hainan islands and created many Southern Min-speaking Chinese communities in Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand.

As Fujian Province has few navigable rivers and plenty of inaccessible mountain ranges it is geographically isolated from other parts of China. Thus, the Min dialects are some of the most heterogeneous in China. There are at least nine different mutually unintelligible Min dialects in Fujian province alone (Ramsey 1987). The better-known varieties of Min dialects include Fuzhou (capital city representative of Northern Min), Xiamen (Amoy, representative of Southern Min) and Chaozhou (Southern Min in Guangdong Province). There are seven tones in the Fuzhou and Xiamen dialects, six in the Jianou dialect, and eight in the Chaozhou dialect. The differences among the varieties of Southern Min spoken in Taiwan and the Hainan islands generally correspond to the differences between the dialects spoken in the region around Quanzhou and Xiamen from which most Southern Min speakers in Taiwan and Hainan originated.

To the west of the Wu-speaking area along the Yangtze River in Jiangxi province is the 贛 Gan-speaking region. The earliest migration wave into northern Jiangxi occurred during the years of the Jin dynasty (265–420 CE). The Gan dialect is generally considered to be a transitional dialect between the languages spoken in the north and south of China. Syllables with -p, -t, -k endings are clearly distinguishable in its Southern varieties, whereas these stops are indistinguishable in its Northern variety spoken in *Nanchang* 南昌, the capital city of Jiangxi province (Ramsey 1987). There are seven tones in the *Nanchang* dialect.

Kejia 客家, popularly known as Hakka before the *pǔtōnghuà* spelling was officially adopted, is the last major dialect group recognized in China. During the later part of the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE), central China was once again ravaged by civil wars and political instability. The Kejia dialects are the result of waves of southward migration from Jiangxi into Fujian after the Tang dynasty. Nowadays, Kejia-speaking communities are scattered all over southern China including Guangdong, Fujian, Taiwan, Guangxi and

Guizhou. The dialect spoken in Meixian 梅县 located in the mountainous eastern Guangdong province is considered to be standard Kejia dialect. There are six tones in this dialect, and it retains the Middle Chinese stop endings.

FURTHER READING

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NOTES

1. In Table 1.1, some non-standard phonetics are used. These are taken from Norman 1988: 13, Table 1.2. Putonghua and Cantonese examples are added by me.
2. This journal also had an official French title, *La Jeunesse*.
3. *Xiandai Hanyu da zidian*.
4. *Shiji* “Records of a historian” is a collection of historical records compiled by a great historian Sima Qian of the early Han dynasty (206 BCE).

2 Phonetics of standard Chinese

Phonetics is the study of the pronunciation of spoken languages. The pronunciation of standard modern Chinese, or standard Chinese, is known as *pǔtōnghuà* 普通话 “common language” in the People’s Republic of China, *guóyǔ* 国语 “national language” in Taiwan, or *huáyǔ* 华语 in Singapore. This standard, hereafter *pǔtōnghuà*, is also the medium of instruction in nearly all campuses in China. In Hong Kong, where people grow up speaking Cantonese, *pǔtōnghuà* is currently a compulsory subject for all students beginning in Primary 1 (equivalent to the first grade in the American school system) of the elementary school. The standard pronunciation of Chinese is based on the variety of Northern Chinese spoken in the capital city, Beijing. Furthermore, in addition to the segmental phones similar to those represented by the letters of the alphabets in European languages, standard Chinese is also a tonal language with one of four basic tones, or a neutral tone, allotted per syllable. Therefore, the syllable structure of standard Chinese is composed of an initial segmental consonant, a medial (also known as on-glide), a vowel, a syllabic terminal (or off-glide), and a supra-segmental tone. The traditional conceptual framework of a Chinese syllable is to analyze Chinese syllables in terms of initials, finals, and tones, in contrast to the cross-linguistic, or common, practice that simply provides a phonemic inventory of consonants and vowels. I have chosen to follow the Chinese tradition so that the reader will become familiar with the sound system of initials, finals, and tones.

In the following discussion, phonetic symbols in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) are given in square brackets, to distinguish them from Chinese, or English, spelling. In this book, *hànyǔ pīnyīn*, the romanized spelling system officially adopted in the People’s Republic of China, will be used to annotate standard Chinese sounds that are not represented in Chinese script. For example, the word for “rabbit” is represented by the italicized *tù*, in the romanized *pīnyīn* spelling, and 兔, the character in the official Chinese orthography. To

describe this Chinese syllable with the phonetic symbols in the IPA, the initial consonant is an aspirated dental stop [t^h], and the final vowel is [ù] with a tone marker [˥] above the vowel representing the fourth tone.

Chinese character for the syllable meaning *rabbit*: 兔

Hànyǔ pīnyīn for the syllable meaning *rabbit*: tù

Segmental phones in the syllable: initial [t^h] and final [u]

Supra-segmental tone mark in the syllable: 4th tone [˥]

Otherwise, the Chinese syllable structure is, in a way, rather simple because no consonant cluster like the English *spr-* or *-nths* with three consonants in a row (thus CCC) is possible. Whereas the initials of a Chinese syllable are mostly an optional consonant represented by a C in the following, the finals begin with an optional medial (represented by an M), a vowel (V) or a diphthong (VV), and an optional nasal consonant (N). That is, the canonical syllable structure in standard Chinese can be represented by the following: (C) (M) V (V/N)¹. In other words, in standard Chinese a syllable may exist as a single vowel, such as è 饿 “hungry” or possibly consist of a string of phones like niǎo 鸟 “bird”, with a syllable structure like CMVV, or niáng 娘 “mother,” CMVN.

2.1 Initials

The initials in Chinese (Figure 2.1) are the optional consonants that can occupy the first position in a syllable. Essentially any of the Chinese consonants can function as an initial. It might be useful to note that in standard Chinese there are no voiced stop sounds. The romanized letters *b*, *d*, *g* in *pīnyīn* spelling indicate unaspirated stops (or no release of the airflow for the stop sounds) closely equivalent to the phonetic values of *p*, *t*, *k* sounds in the English words like *span*, *store*, and *ski* that are phonetically different from the aspirated stops (release of the airflow) in *pan*, *toll*, and *key*. Furthermore, labial sounds *b*, *p*, *f* [p, p^h, f] are voiceless consonants produced with the lips blocking the airflow from the lungs partially. Alveolar refers to the ridge right above the front teeth; therefore, the production of the alveolar sounds *d*, *t*, *n*, *l* [t, t^h, n, l] requires the tip of the tongue touching the alveolar ridge to block the airflow. All the Chinese dental sounds *z*, *c*, *s* [ts, ts^h, s] are fricatives which means the tip of the tongue is positioned right behind the upper front teeth blocking

	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Sample words</i>
Labials	b [p]	bā 八 “eight” běi 北 “north” bān 班 “class”
	p [p ^h]	pā 趴 “lie” péi 陪 “accompany” pàn 盼 “hope for”
	m [m]	mā 妈 “mother” pēi 美 “beautiful” máng 忙 “busy”
	f [f]	fā 发 “send” fēi 飞 “fly” fáng 房 “house”
Alveolars	d [t]	dī 滴 “drop” dēi 得 “should” dān 单 “single”
	t [t ^h]	tī 踢 “kick” tái 台 “stage” tán 谈 “talk”
	n [n]	ná 拿 “take” nǎo 脑 “brain” nán 难 “difficult”
	l [l]	lù 路 “road” luò 落 “fall” lóng 龙 “dragon”
Dentals	z [ts]	zī 资 “capital” zéi 贼 “thief” zēng 增 “increase”
	c [ts ^h]	cì 次 “time” cái 裁 “cut” cēng 曾 “once”
	s [s]	sī 丝 “silk” suì 岁 “year” sān 三 “three”
Retroflexes	zh [tʂ]	zhù 住 “live” zhuī 追 “chase” zhāng 章 “chapter”
	ch [tʂ ^h]	chù 处 “place” chǒu 丑 “clown” chǎn 产 “produce”
	sh [ʂ]	shù 树 “tree” shuài 帅 “smart” shàng 上 “up”
	r [ʐ]	rì 日 “sun” róu 柔 “soft” róng 熔 “melt”
Palatals	j [tɕ]	jī 击 “hit” jiē 街 “street” jiàn 见 “see”
	q [tɕ ^h]	qī 七 “seven” quē 缺 “lack” qín 勤 “hardworking”
	x [ç]	xī 西 “west” xuè 血 “blood” xùn 训 “instruct”
Velars	g [k]	gē 歌 “song” gǎi 改 “correct” gāng 钢 “steel”
	k [k ^h]	kē 颗 “piece” kāi 开 “open” kǒng 恐 “afraid”
	h [x]	hē 喝 “drink” hǎo 好 “good” hóng 红 “red”

Figure 2.1 Chinese initial consonants

the airflow. The retroflex sounds *ch*, *zh*, *sh*, *r* [tʂ^h, tʂ, ʂ, ʐ], are created with the tip of the tongue curling toward the front of the hard palate blocking the airflow. The palatals *j* and *q* are shaped with the tip of the tongue right behind the lower front teeth to block the airflow, i.e., *j* [tɕ] resembling the English initial in *jay* (but voiceless and unaspirated) and *q* [tɕ^h] aspirated. As a matter of fact, the palatal series *j*, *q*, *x* [tɕ, tɕ^h, ç] is in complementary distribution with the velar series *k*, *g*, *h* [k, k^h, x]. In other words, it is entirely possible that the velar sounds [k, k^h, x] are palatalized into [tɕ, tɕ^h, ç] by the following high vowels or medials such as *i*, *u*, or *ü* as is evidenced by the fact that *k*, *g*, and *h* never co-occur with high vowels, and *j*, *q*, and *x* never co-occur with the non-high vowels.

2.2 Finals

Traditionally, Chinese finals are divided into three parts: an optional medial, a necessary vowel, and an optional syllabic terminal, i.e., finals = (medial)

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Sample words</i>
i /y [i]	liǎo 了 “finish” yě 也 “also” yī 一 “one”
u/w [u]	huó 活 “live” wǒ 我 “I” wàn 万 “ten thousand”
ü/u/yu [y]	nù 虐 “malaria” jué 掘 “dig” yuǎn 远 “far”

Figure 2.2 Chinese medials

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Sample words</i>
Low a [a]	pà 怕 “afraid”
Central e [ɛ]/[ə]	yè 叶 “leave” dé 德 “virtue” děng 等 “wait”
Mid-back o [o]	wǒ 我 “I” tóng 铜 “copper”
High-front i/yi [i]	yī 一 “one” mǐ 米 “rice” yíng 赢 “win”
High-back u/w [u]	dú 读 “read” wú 无 “nothing”
High-front ü/yu [y] (with lips rounded)	lǜ 绿 “green” yún 云 “cloud”

Figure 2.3 Chinese main vowels

+ vowel + (terminal). Thus, diphthongs in Chinese are so dissected into different parts of the finals.

2.2.1 Medials (*on-glide*)

Standard Chinese medials (Figure 2.2) have only three possible sounds, [i], [u], and [y] such as the segment [i] in the syllable *liǎo* 了 “finish.” Within the official *pīnyīn* spelling system, when there is no initial in a syllable, the medial [u] is spelled as a *w*. Accordingly, [y], in a medial, is also written as *u* most of the time with the exception in the cases when it follows an *n*, or an *l*. At the syllable-initial position, when the letter *y* is added, [y] is then written as *yu*. The medial, [i] is also written as *y* at the syllable-initial position.

2.2.2 Main vowels

There are six main vowels in standard Chinese (Figure 2.3), including a low vowel *a* [a], a mid-central vowel *e* [ə] (realized as a mid-front vowel [ɛ] when it immediately follows high medials such as [i] or [y]), a mid-back vowel *o* [o], a high-front vowel *i* [i], a high-back vowel *u* [u] and a high-front rounded

<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Sample words</i>
i [i]	ài 爱 “love” féi 肥 “fat” wài 外 “outside”
u [u]	yǒu 有 “have” gòu 够 “enough”
o [o]	jiǎo 脚 “foot” yào 要 “want” ào 傲 “arrogant”
n [n]	nán 难 “difficult” lán 蓝 “blue” ēn 恩 “kind”
ng [ŋ]	láng 狼 “wolf” qiáng 强 “strong” āng 肮 “dirty”

Figure 2.4 Chinese syllabic terminals

<i>Sample words</i>			
背	bei [pèi] “back”	背儿	[bà̯r]
鸡	jī [tɕī] “chicken”	鸡儿	[tɕī̯r]
裙	qún [tɕʰýn] “skirt”	裙儿	[tɕʰý̯r]
凳	dèng [təŋ] “bench”	凳儿	[tə̯r]
熊	xióng [çýŋ] “bear”	熊儿	[çý̯r]

Figure 2.5 Chinese rhotacization

(with lip rounding) vowel *ü* [y] that is spelled as *yu* at the syllable-initial position and *ü* after *n* and *l*, otherwise written as *u*. At the syllable-initial position, [i] is written as *yi* and [u] written as *wu*.

2.2.3 Syllabic terminals (off-glide)

There are five optional syllabic terminals in standard Chinese (Figure 2.4), with three vowels [i], [u] [o] and two nasals, an alveolar [n] and a velar [ŋ]. No labial nasal [m] is possible at the end of a syllable, although a velar nasal can occur only as a syllabic terminal in standard Chinese.

2.3 Rhotacization

A phonological change typical of standard Chinese and coming from the Beijing dialect is called rhotacization (Figure 2.5). A great majority of the finals in standard Chinese can undergo this phonological process, known as *érhuà* 儿化 in Chinese, by suffixing a diminutive marker *-er* to the finals of many words in the spoken language. When this suffixation process, or rhotacization, occurs, the phonetic values of the endings are changed. For

Table 2.1 *The four basic tones in standard Chinese.*

Pitch	1st tone	2nd tone	3rd tone	4th tone
■ 5	→			
■ 4		↗		
■ 3			↘	
■ 2			↗	
■ 1				↘

example, [i] changes to [iəŋ], [ai] to [aŋ], [ən] to [əŋ], [iŋ] to [iəŋ] (the loss of the velar nasal is compensated by the nasalized vowel), [loŋ] to [lūr], etc.

2.4 Tones

At the supra-segmental level involving the entire syllable rather than a single phone, there are four basic tones, as well as a short and weak neutral tone in standard Chinese. The most frequently used system in describing Chinese tones is the scale of five pitch levels developed by YR Chao in 1930. The four tones are given in Table 2.1.

The first tone in standard Chinese is also called a high-level tone with a pitch value of 55, indicating that the tone starts and ends at the same pitch level of 5. The second tone starts at the pitch level 3 and ends at level 5, and is thus known as a high-rising 35 tone. The third tone with a 214 contour is commonly referred to as a low-rising tone, starting to dip at level 2, rising from level 1, and ending at level 4. The fourth tone is a 51 falling tone, starting at level 5 and ending at level 1. For example, the string of phones like *ma* can have a different meaning depending on the pitch values, *mā* 55 妈 “mother,” *má* 35 麻 “hemp,” *mǎ* 214 马 “horse,” and *mà* 51 骂 “scold.” According to the *pīnyīn* system, a tone mark emulating the pitch contour of a given tone can be placed on top of the vowel of the syllable, thus the first tone (55) is represented by $\bar{\quad}$ above the vowel of the syllable, the second tone (35) by $\acute{\quad}$, the third tone (214) by $\check{\quad}$, and the fourth tone (51) by $\grave{\quad}$.

Standard Chinese pronunciation includes a neutral tone that is used somewhat arbitrarily. Neutral tone typically occurs with some grammatical items such as a verbal suffix like *le* 了, in which the central vowel is regularly reduced to a short and weak neutral tone. Following standard *pīnyīn* practice, no tone marker is placed above the vowels in syllables with a neutral tone. Sometimes a compound word could have a syllable realized with a neutral tone such as the syllable *ba* in *lǎba* 喇叭 “trumpet.” Despite this, native speakers of Southern Chinese dialects commonly pronounce syllables that should have a neutral tone in standard pronunciation with a basic tone such as the first tone for *bā* for the word *lǎba* 喇叭 “trumpet” due to the fact that neutral tones of this kind do not exist in many Southern dialects.

2.5 Tone-sandhi

Another important supra-segmental feature of standard Chinese is tone-sandhi. The term *sandhi* originally comes from Sanskrit meaning junction, connection, combination, or liaison (Chen 2000). Therefore, tone-sandhi in Chinese refers to tonal alternations when syllables are connected in natural speech. For example, the basic tone for the syllable *yī* — “one” is a high-level tone, 55. It should be realized as such when it is at the end of a word or followed by another number. It should be realized as a high-rising tone (35) when it is followed by a syllable with a high-falling tone (51) such as *yí-tiào* in (2.1a). However, when it is immediately followed by a syllable with a high-level tone (55), a high-rising tone (35), or a low-rising tone (214), it must undergo a process of tone-sandhi and be realized as a high-falling tone (51) such as in example (2.1b).

- (2.1) a. 第一 一九六零 一跳
 dī-yī yī-jǐu-liù-líng yí-tiào
 Ordinal-one 1-9-6-0 one-jump
 “the first” “1960” “a jump”
- b. 一张 一年 一碗
 yī-zhāng → yì-zhāng yī-nián → yì-nián yī-wǎn → yì-wǎn
 a CL a year a CL
 “a piece” “a year” “a bowl”

Similarly, although the basic tone for the word *bù* 不 “not” is a high-falling tone (51), it is changed into a high-rising tone (35) when it is immediately followed by another high-falling tone such as is evidenced by example (2.2).

- (2.2) a. 不说 不来 不想

 not say not come not think
 “do not say” “do not come” “do not want”
- b. 不去
 bù qù → bú qù
 not go
 “do not go”

However, the most well-known, as well as most complicated, tone-sandhi phenomenon in standard Chinese involves the consecutive third-tone syllables, (214). The general rule can be stated as: when two third-tone syllables occur contiguously, the first one is changed into a second tone, i.e., the first low-rising tone (214) changes into a high-rising tone (35) such as in example (2.3).

- (2.3) 礼品 水果
 lǐ-pǐn → lí-pǐn shuǐ-guǒ → shuí-guǒ
 3 3 2 3 3 3 2 3
 rite-goods water-fruit
 “gift” “fruit”

Furthermore, the application of the third tone-sandhi rule in standard Chinese goes beyond the word-level examples and is related to a number of factors such as the length of a word, the syntactic relationship between the contiguous third-tone syllables, the speed of speech, and the order of application. Given the limit of space in this volume, I cannot introduce in this chapter all the theories (Chen 2000, Duanmu 2000, Shih 1997) that have been proposed in the field. In what follows, I will introduce some facts with respect to this sandhi phenomenon. Readers who are interested in finding a fuller account should refer directly to the cited literature.

This tone-sandhi rule is applied obligatorily within a word of two or three syllables as in examples (2.3) and (2.4).

- (2.6) 你好?
 nǐ hǎo → ní hǎo (*nǐ hǎo)
 3 3 2 3 3 3
 2nd good
 “How are you?”

Finally, there are many ways to realize the tonal values of each of the syllables in sentence (2.7) which is exclusively composed of third-tone syllables. In isolation *lǎo lǐ mǎi hǎo jiǔ* can only be pronounced in the third tone. However, in connected speech the third-tone syllables sometimes must be changed into a second tone. In a disyllabic word, *lǎo* “old” and *lǐ* “Name,” the first third-tone syllable *lǎo* must change into a second tone *láo* due to the obligatory application of the tone-sandhi rule for disyllabic words. *Hǎo* “good” and *jiǔ* “wine” placed together to form a noun meaning “good wine” must also undergo the tone-sandhi rule by changing the third tone *hǎo* into a second tone *háo*.

- (2.7) 老李买好酒
 lǎo-lǐ mǎi hǎo jiǔ
 old-Name buy good wine
 “Old Li bought good wine.” or “Old Li finished buying wine.”

However, if *mǎi* “buy” and *hǎo* are used as a disyllabic compound verb meaning *to finish buying*, the third-tone verb *mǎi* must be realized in the second tone *mái-háo jiǔ* “finish buying wine.” Furthermore, at the juncture between a noun phrase and a verb phrase in the middle of the sentence, the tone-sandhi rule is optional, i.e., in sentence (2.7) the third tone *lǐ* can be realized optionally with a second or third tone. As a matter of fact, other than the last syllable, the first two third-tone syllables as in *mái-háo jiǔ* must undergo the tone-sandhi rule in spite of the juncture between the compound verb *mái-háo* and the noun *jiǔ*. So it seems that at the edge of a sentence such as *láo-lǐ mǎi-háo jiǔ* the application of the tone-sandhi rule is obligatory as well. Finally, in fast speech, all of the third-tone syllables in sentence (2.7), other than the last, can be realized as the second-tone grammatically, thus, *láo-lí mǎi-háo jiǔ*, meaning either “Old Li bought good wine” or “Old Li finished buying wine” depending on context.

Unfortunately, given the complexity of the tone-sandhi rules, no simple solution is available. Readers who want to find a full account may want to refer to various theories that have been proposed in resolving the puzzle (Chen 2000, Duanmu 2000, Shih 1997).

FURTHER READING

- Chen, Ping. 1999. *Modern Chinese: history and sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Chen, Matthew Y. 2000. *Tone sandhi: Patterns across Chinese dialects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duanmu, San. 2000. *The phonology of standard Chinese*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

NOTE

1. () indicates that the element inside is optional. In other words, the only obligatory element of a Chinese syllable is a vowel.

3 Chinese morphology 1

Morphology is the study of words and word-making. Its goal is to understand the meaning in the relationships between words and the ways in which they are expressed, including how grammatical relationships are marked in different languages. For example, plurality is explicitly marked by an *-s* on English nouns, e.g., *book* as a singular noun and *books* as a plural noun. Furthermore, the relationships between words may require some morphological changes in different parts of a sentence. For instance, the verb form varies depending on the person and number of the subject noun phrase in an English sentence such as *This book is very interesting* vs. *These books are very interesting* in which the subjects and verbs have an agreement relationship, i.e., a third-person singular, subjective noun corresponds to the copular verb *is* and a third-person plural subjective noun to a different copular verb *are*.

Cross-linguistically, the minimal unit of meaning is commonly called a *morpheme*, and it is subdivided into two major types, bound and free. Bound morphemes primarily refer to affixes such as the English plural marker *-s* which only makes sense when attached to a nominal stem. Alternatively, a noun like *book* is called a free morpheme because it makes sense all by itself and refers to something in the real world, or is called a stem for an affix to be attached to.

Affixes are prefixes such as the English *un-* in *unhappy* and suffixes such as the English *-able* in *laughable*. Affixes can also be derivational or inflectional. In general, inflectional affixes refer to elements such as the plural marker *-s* in English and are fewer in number than derivational affixes as the former function to create forms of words with additional grammatical meaning such as plurality. Other inflectional morphemes in English include *-ed* indicating past tense, *-ing* progressive, *'s* possessive, *-er* comparative, *-est* superlative, etc. Derivational morphemes such as *-able* in English tend to be more numerous than inflectional affixes in a language as they operate on a stem, or a root, like *laugh* resulting in a new word *laughable*. Other derivational affixes in

English include *re-* in *replay*, *-ment* in *establishment*, *-y* in *lucky*, etc. Finally, not all bound morphemes are affixes, there are also bound roots such as *-sist* in English that constitutes the root, or stem, for derivational processes such as to generate words like *resist*, *consist*, *subsist* in spite of the fact that they cannot occur by themselves to make sense in a language, just like morphologically bound affixes. Although they are not free morphemes that make up most stems, they still provide a base form to shape new words with other derivational affixes in a language. Other bound roots that provide a base form to shape new words in English include *-fer* in *confer*, *defer*, *prefer*, *transfer*, and *-ceive* in *conceive*, *receive*, *deceive*. In other words, in the morphology of a language, there are free morphemes, also known as stems or roots, like *laugh*, and *play*, bound roots like *-sist*, and *-fer*, and bound morphemes, or affixes, like *re-*, *-ment*, and *-y*.

Compared to English, the boundary of a Chinese word is far from transparent, as many morphological markers like affixes are often non-existent because the Chinese language does not mark tense, or parts of speech, morphologically. The fluidity of the concept “word” in Chinese has even motivated some to claim (Hoosain 1992, Zhang 1992) that morphemes are more versatile in Chinese than other languages and more indeterminate with respect to their bound-free status. The notion of “word”, known as *cí* 词 in Chinese, is neither a particularly intuitive concept nor easily defined. Furthermore, Chinese orthography requires no space between characters, regardless of their morphological status, i.e., no distinction is made in writing between free and bound morphemes, which obscures their existence in the speaker’s mindset. On the other hand, *wénzì* 文字 “characters” that are used to represent each morpheme-syllable with a character regardless of its morphological status appear to be a more natural concept. Perhaps because of this reason, nearly all Chinese dictionaries list vocabularies through characters, instead of words. Thus dictionaries are most commonly referred to as *zìdiǎn* 字典, literally “character standards.” The use of the term *cídiǎn* 词典 “word standards” for dictionary is really a recent phenomenon that appeared in the language after the Japanese began to use *cí* 词 to represent the idea of *word* in the nineteenth century. Still, this practice does not change the fact that, in Chinese writing, *character* is perhaps a more “intuitive” concept than a *word*. For example, according to Chinese orthography, the six syllables in sentence (3.1a) are represented

by six Chinese characters without any space between them in spite of the fact that *-le* 了 is an inflectionally bound morpheme affixed to a verbal stem indicating perfective aspect (PFV for short; see Appendix 2 for a full list of capitalized abbreviations). Although the suffixal nature of *-le* in adhering to a verbal stem suggests that there is morphology in Chinese, the same character 了 can be phonetically realized as *liǎo* to represent a morphologically free verb meaning “to finish” in (3.1b).

- (3.1) a. 他喝了一口水。
 tā hē -le yì-kǒu shuǐ
 3rd drink-PFV one-CL water
 “He took a sip of water.”
- b. 草草了事
 cǎo -cǎo liǎo shì
 grass-grass finish matter
 “To finish a task hastily”

Historically, the inflectional aspect marker *-le* is a phonologically reduced form that has been grammatically changed over time from a Middle Chinese morphologically free verb “to finish.” This kind of phonological and morphological change is not reflected in Chinese writing.

The most serious difficulty arises from the fact that it is not immediately clear where a Chinese word ends. For example, *liǎo shì* in (3.1b), with its verb–object structure, should be treated as a verb phrase that is composed of a verb and its object. However, although strings like *chī-fàn* 吃饭 eat-rice “to eat,” *tiào-wǔ* 跳舞 jump-dance “to dance,” *chàng-gē* 唱歌 sing-song “sing,” *guān-xīn* 关心 close-heart “concern,” all appear to have a verb–object structure and represent one idea in (3.2a), some may still be a word, in spite of the phrase-like structure. Although the suffixal *-le* can separate most of the two syllables in (3.2b), it cannot do so with some such as *guān-xīn* in (3.2c), for which the verbal suffix *-le* must follow *xīn*, suggesting that *guān-xīn* might, unlike the others, still be a word. Further examination of the data in (3.2) reaffirms that the inseparable *guān-xīn* behaves more like a single word (3.2g), whereas the others can be split apart by a numeral classifier (glossed as CL, see Appendix 2 for a full list of capitalized abbreviations) in (3.2d–f). Finally, if *guān-xīn* is a word, the seemingly inseparable *guān-xīn* unexpectedly can be separated

by a question-word, *shènme*, after all in (3.2h). Then, is *guān-xīn* a word, or not?

- (3.2) a. 吃饭 跳舞 唱歌 关心
 chī-fàn tiào -wǔ chàng-gē guān-xīn
 eat-rice hop-dance sing-song close-heart
 “eat” “dance” “sing” “concern”
- b. 吃了饭, 跳了舞, 唱了歌, *关了心
 chī-le fàn tiào-le wǔ chàng-le gē guān-le xīn
 eat-PFV rice jump-PFV dance sing-PFV song close-PFV heart
 “ate” “danced” “sang”
- c. 关心了这件事
 guān-xīn -le zhè-jìan shì
 close-heart-PFV DEM-CL matter
 “to concern with this task”
- d. 吃两碗饭
 chī liǎng-wǎn fàn
 eat two-bowl rice
 “eat two bowls of rice”
- e. 跳几次舞
 tiào jǐ-cì wǔ
 jump several-time dance
 “dance several times”
- f. 唱一首歌
 chàng yì-shǒu gē
 sing a-CL song
 “sing a song”
- g. *关一点心
 guān yì-diǎn xīn
 close a-CL heart
 “concern a little bit”
- h. 关什么心
 guān shénme xīn
 close what heart
 “concern what?”

In this chapter, I will look at Chinese morphology through its word-forming strategies including compounding, derivation-like processes, and inflection-like processes. Chapter 4 deals with various linguistic operations involving Chinese clitics, reduplications, and other phenomena that ask for a wider perspective beyond word level. In the end of Chapter 4, we will return to discuss how to understand the difficulty in defining Chinese words relating to words like *guān-xīn* 关心 close-heart “concern” that sometimes appear to be a single word, and sometimes appear to be two separate words.

3.1 Compounding

It has been widely observed (Norman 1988; Packard 2000; LaPolla 2003) that roughly 3,500 years ago in Chinese history, there was a gradual loss of the derivational morphology characteristic of other Sino-Tibetan languages, and the overwhelming majority of the Old-Chinese morphemes were monosyllabic, i.e., each syllable is a word. Nevertheless, in the last two millennia or so, the coining of new words overwhelmingly yielded forms that are disyllabic, leading to a new modern-Chinese morphology that is primarily multi-syllabic in nature, i.e., word = any number of syllables. For example, in Old Chinese the sentence with six syllables in (3.3a) has to be provided in standard Chinese with more disyllabic words such as the thirteen syllables in (3.3b).

- (3.3) a. 人之初性本善
 rén zhī chū xìng běn shàn
 human REL begin nature origin good
- b. 人生下来的时候, 本性是善良的。
 rén shēng xià-lái de shí-hòu, běn-xìng shì
 human bear down-come REL time-time origin-nature be
 shàn-liáng de
 good-good NOM

“When a human was born, (one’s) nature was good originally.”

Of course, there can be many reasons for the need for at least twice as many characters, or syllables, to express the same ideas in modern Chinese as Old Chinese. One important factor is morphological compounding that occurred in the last millennia leading to the dominance of disyllabic words in

modern Chinese. Compounding operations which allow two, at times three, free words to form a compound word arbitrarily such as *xià-lái* 下来 down-come “come down” and *bīng-shān* 冰山 “ice-hill” “ice-covered mountains” in which the two formants are fully-fledged words in modern Chinese, will be represented by *Root* beginning with a capital R signifying its morphological status as a free morpheme. There are also Chinese compounds with two bound formants that were once morphologically free to form words like *shàn-liáng* 善良 “good” and *mù-cái* 木材 “wood,” in which the two non-affixal, bound morphemes are represented by *root* beginning with a small letter *r* in this book to distinguish it from *Root* that stands for a free morpheme in modern Chinese. Actually a bound root may be the largest class of morpheme type in forming Chinese words (Packard 2000: 77), reflecting its history as a monosyllabic language. There are root-*Root* formations like *yǐ-wáng* 蚁王 ant-king “queen ant,” in which the first formant is a bound morpheme in addition to *Root-root* formations like *gōng-yǐ* 工蚁 work-ant “worker ant,” in which the second formant is bound in modern Chinese. According to Lü (1984), 61% of the 3,000 most commonly used Chinese words are disyllabic. Additional examples are given in (3.4).

- (3.4) root-root type: 蘑菇 *mógū* mushroom-mushroom “mushroom”
 讨论 *tǎo-lùn* discuss-discuss “to discuss”
 Root-*Root* type: 马路 *mǎ-lù* horse-road “road”
 借用 *jiè-yòng* borrow-use “to borrow”
 root-*Root* type: 触角 *chù-jiǎo* touch-horn “(insect) antenna”
 购买 *gòu-mǎi* buy-buy “to buy”
 Root-root type: 赌具 *dǔ-jù* gamble-utensil “gambling equipment”
 帮助 *bāng-zhù* help-assist “help”

In accord with Packard’s (2000: 127) finding that nearly 90% of compound nouns have a nominal formant on the right and 85% of compound verbs have a verbal formant on the left, the default position of the head of a nominal is said to be on the right-hand side of a disyllabic compound, and the head of a verb is on the left-hand side. This finding nicely corresponds to the syntactic structure of Chinese, i.e., the head of a noun phrase is on the right, and the head of a verb phrase is on the left (see Chapter 7).

(3.5) Nouns with head on the right (in bold):

- Root–Root: 火山 *huǒ-shān* fire-mountain “volcano”
 投手 *tóu-shǒu* throw-hand “pitcher”
 root–root: 木板 *mù-bǎn* wood-plank “board”
 导弹 *dǎo-dàn* guide-bullet “guided missile”
 Root–root: 电脑 *diàn-nǎo* electric-brain “computer”
 租金 *zū-jīn* rent-money “rent”
 root–Root: 足球 *zú-qiú* foot-ball “soccer”
 触角 *chū-jiǎo* touch-horn “(insect) antenna”

Verbs with head on the left (in bold):

- Root–Root: 闹鬼 *nào-guǐ* make-ghost “to haunt”
 吸入 *xī-rù* inhale-enter “to breathe in”
 root–root: 解决 *jiě-jué* untie-resolve “to solve”
 示威 *shì-wēi* show-strength “to demonstrate”
 Root–root: 出版 *chū-bǎn* emit-edition “to publish”
 调试 *tiáo-shì* adjust-test “to test”
 root–Root: 节省 *jié-shěng* reduce-save “to save”
 疑心 *yí-xīn* doubt-heart “to suspect”

The relationship between the morpheme(s) on the left and the morpheme on the right for each nominal may shed some light on the modifying nature of the morpheme on the left. For example, the morphemes on the right in (3.6a) show the kind of glasses, (3.6b) indicate the location of a medical condition, (3.6c) depict the form of the flowers (at times somewhat metaphorically), (3.6d) show what the cups contain, (3.6e) indicate the producer of the milk, and (3.6f) mark the types of trees.

- (3.6) a. 眼镜 *yǎn-jìng* eye-glass “glasses”
 放大镜 *fāngdà-jìng* enlarge-glass “magnifying glass”
 望远镜 *wàng-yuǎn-jìng* look-far-glass “telescope”
 b. 胃癌 *wèi-ái* stomach-cancer “stomach cancer”
 肺癌 *fèi-ái* lung-cancer “lung cancer”
 c. 雪花 *xuě-huā* snow-flower “snow flakes”
 水花 *shuǐ-huā* water-flower “water spray”
 红花 *hóng-huā* red-flower “red flower”

- d. 茶杯 *chá-bēi* tea-cup “tea cup”
 酒杯 *jiǔ-bēi* wine-cup “wine glasses”
 水杯 *shuǐ-bēi* water-cup “water glasses”
- e. 牛奶 *niú-nǎi* cow-milk “cow milk”
 羊奶 *yáng-nǎi* sheep-milk “sheep milk”
- f. 松树 *sōng-shù* pine-tree “pine tree”
 桃树 *táo-shù* peach-tree “peach tree”
 苹果树 *píngguǒ-shù* apple-tree “apple tree”

That the morpheme on the left in a V-O type verbal compound such as 关心 *guān-xīn* close-heart “to concern” and 闹鬼 *nào-guǐ* make-ghost “to haunt” should be treated as the head of the verb is quite intuitive due to the fact that they are the sole verbal elements in the compound. A large number of verb-verb compounds¹ are composed of a verb that is followed by a resultative complement that can be subdivided into at least four types, restrictive resultative (3.7a), non-restrictive resultative (3.7b), directional resultative (3.7c), and attainment resultative (3.7d).² A common characteristic of the morpheme on the right in a resultative verb compound is to indicate a resultant state of an action symbolized by the morpheme on the left.

- (3.7) a. 节省 解决
jié-shěng jiě-jué
 reduce-save untie-resolve
 “to save” “to solve”
- b. 看见 打破
kàn-jiàn dǎ-pò
 look-see hit-break
 “to see” “to break”
- c. 走上(去)了二楼 跳下来
zǒu-shàng(-qù)-le èr -lóu tiào-xià-lái
 walk-up-(go)-PFV two floor jump-down-come
 “walk up to the second floor” “jump down (toward speaker)”
- d. 做完 找到
zuò-wán zhǎo-dào
 do-complete find-reach
 “to finish” “to find”

In the restrictive resultative verb compounds the two syllables do not allow an infixal potential marker *-de-* to occur between them, such as the ungrammatical examples in (3.8).

- (3.8) *节得省 *解得决
 jié-de-shěng jiě-de-jué
 reduce-POT-save untie-POT-resolve

The examples in (3.9) are non-restrictive and can be separated by the infix *-de-*.

- (3.9) 看得见 打得破
 kàn-de-jiàn dǎ-de-pò
 look-POT-see hit-POT-break
 “can be seen” “can be broken”

Directional verb resultatives refer to verbal compounds in which the non-head verbs on the right typically come from a set of directional verbs such as *shàng* 上 “up,” *xià* 下 “down,” *jìn* 进 “enter,” *chū* 出 “exit,” *lái* 来 “come,” *qù* 去 “go,” etc. In addition to compounds like those in (3.7c) that have a Root verb of displacement functioning as the head of the compound, two directional verbs themselves can form a compound such as those in (3.10). It is interesting to note that *lái* 来 “come” or *qù* 去 “go” indicating a deictic center in this type of directional verb compounds always occur last.

- (3.10) 出去 出来
 chū-qù chū-lái
 exit-go exit-come
 “go out” “come out”

Furthermore, it is grammatically correct for an object such as *yī-běn shū* “a book” in (3.11) to occur after the verb on the left, or right after the first directional verb such as the one in (3.11b). It can even occur at the end of the phrase such as the one in (3.11c) when the last directional verb is *lái*. But when the last directional verb is *qù* “to go,” the object arbitrarily cannot occur between the two directional verbs such as the example in (3.11b).

- (3.11) a. 拿一本书出来/去
 nǎ yì -běn-shū chū-lái
 take one-CL-book exit-come
 “to take a book out.”
- b. 拿出一本书来/*去
 ná chū yì-běn shū lái/*qu
 take exit one-CL book come/go
 “to take a book out.”
- c. 拿出来/去一本书
 ná chū lái/qù yì-běn shū
 take exit come/go one-CL book
 “to take a book out.”

Attainment resultative verb compounds have a phase-marker verb (Li and Thompson 1981) on the right indicating the attainment of an action symbolized by the verb on the left such as the examples in (3.7d and 3.12). The verbs with this semantic function include verbs like *dào* 到 “arrive,” *wán* 完 “finish,” *zhǎo* 着 “on target,” *zhù* 住 “hold on,” and *hǎo* 好 “good.”

- (3.12) a. 我看到了火星
 wǒ kàn-dào-le huǒ-xīng
 1st see-arrive-PFV fire-planet
 “I saw Mars.”
- b. 我看完/好了。
 wǒ kàn-wán/hǎo -le
 1st see-finish/good-PFV
 “I finished reading.”
- c. 他猜着了
 tā cāi -zhǎo -le
 3rd guess-on target-le
 “He guessed it right.”
- d. 你抓住这条绳
 nǐ zhuā-zhù zhè-tiáo-shéng
 2nd grab-hold DEM-CL-rope
 “You (should) grab onto this rope.”

Metaphorical uses of some of the directional verbs to the right of a regular verb like those in (3.13) are functionally equivalent to phase markers indicating attainment.

- (3.13) a. 看上了她
 kàn-shàng -le tā
 look-up-PFV 3rd
 “fall in love with her”
- b. 猜出来
 cāi-chū-lái
 guess-exit-come
 “guess out (an answer)”

The above examples show that the default position for the head of a compound nominal is on the right, whereas the default position for the head of a compound verb is on the left. However, there are many exceptions. First of all, many formants of compound nouns and verbs are coordinate in nature. For example, nouns like *mǎi-mài* 买卖 buy-sell “business,” *shuǐ-tǔ* 水土 water-earth “climate” and verbs like *tǎo-lùn* 讨论 talk-talk “discuss,” *ān-pái* 安排 arrange-arrange “arrange” have two formants that are parallel to each other within a common semantic domain. In these compounds, the notion of headedness seems irrelevant. Moreover, verbal compounds with such a coordinate structure behave like restrictive resultatives that do not co-occur with the infixal potential marker *-de-* as is evidenced by the grammatically incorrect **tǎo-de-lùn* 讨得论 or **ān-de-pái* 安得排. Additional examples of the coordinate type include *zhì-zào* 制造 “produce,” *qū-zhú* 驱逐 “chase,” *dǎ-tàn* 打探 “inquire,” *dǎ-dù* 打赌 “gamble,” *yìn-zhì* 印制 “print,” *zhuó-mó* 琢磨 “consider,” and *zhàn-yǒu* 占有 “possess.” Second, the overriding concern in forming onomatopoeic words such as *pīnpāng* 乒乒 “table tennis” and transliterations such as *pútáo* 葡萄 “grapes” is perhaps the original sounds and, therefore, the notion of head is also irrelevant in these cases. They are not separable by the infixal marker either. Third, compound verbs like *xīn-téng* 心疼 heart-ache “love dearly” and *shēng-zhāng* 声张 sound-open “make noise” in (3.14) both have the verb-like elements on the right, and not in the default position on the left.

- (3.14) a. 妈妈很心疼他
 mā-ma hěn xīn-téng tā
 mother very heart-ache 3rd
 “Mother loves him dearly.”
- b. 妈妈很疼她
 mā-ma hěn téng tā
 mother very ache 3rd
 “Mother loves her dearly.”
- c. 别声张
 bié shēng-zhāng
 NEG sound-open
 “Don’t make noise.”

3.2 Derivation-like affixes

Chinese derivation-like affixes are bound morphemes consisting of prefixes and suffixes that can be attached to free words and bound roots to form new nouns and verbs. Cross-linguistically, derivational affixes are a class of bound morphemes that can be applied to only a selective set of lexical items within a grammatical category in an unpredictable manner (Bybee et al. 1994). For example, whereas an English prefix like *un-* can be grammatically attached to words like *happy*, *faithful*, and *fortunate*, it cannot be attached to many other English adjectives such as *merry*, *loyal*, *auspicious*.

3.2.1 Prefixes

Chinese prefixes mostly involve morphemes like *lǎo-/xiǎo-* 老/小, *dì-* 第, and *chū-* 初. *Lǎo* and *xiǎo* are free morphemes literally meaning “old” and “small” in Chinese. When they are used as prefixes in front of a name depending on one’s seniority, they indicate a sense of familiarity functioning somewhat like English nicknames: *Vicky* for Victoria, *Bill* for William, etc. Therefore, a Chinese speaker may greet a person his/her senior whose last name is *Zhāng* as *lǎo-zhāng* and a person of the same name, but his/her junior, as *xiǎo-zhāng*. It might be interesting to note that *lǎo* has a much larger currency in colloquial Chinese than *xiǎo* as the examples in (3.14–15) reveal.

- (3.14) 老张 小张 老大 老二
 lǎo-zhāng xiǎo-zhāng lǎo-dà lǎo-èr
 old-Name small-Name old-big old-2nd
 “Old Zhang” “Young Zhang” “eldest child” “second child”
- (3.15) 老外 老中 老美 老日 老广
 lǎo-wài lǎo-zhōng lǎo-měi lǎo-rì lǎo-guǎng
 old-foreign old-Chinese old-American old-Japan old-guangdong
 “foreigners” “Chinese” “Americans” “Japanese” “Cantonese”

However, such a sense of familiarity is not present when it is used in animal names.

- (3.16) 老虎 老鼠 老鹰 老鸦
 lǎo-hǔ lǎo-shǔ lǎo-yīng lǎo-yā
 old-tiger old-mouse old-eagle old-crow
 “tiger” “mouse” “eagle” “crow”

Xiǎo- as a prefix has a diminutive sense as is demonstrated by the examples in (3.17).

- (3.17) 小孩 小菜 小鸟 小说
 xiǎo-hái xiǎo-cài xiǎo-niǎo xiǎo-shuō
 small-child small-dish small-bird small-speak
 “children” “dish” “bird” “novel”

It can also mark the elementary level as a school prefix.

- (3.18) 小学 小一 小二 小六
 xiǎo-xué xiǎo-yī xiǎo-èr xiǎo-liù
 small-school small-one small-two small-six
 “elementary school” “1st grade” “2nd grade” “6th grade”

Di- 第 literally means *class*, as used in a bound root in a word like *mén-dì* 门第 door-class “family status,” but it has evolved into a prefix marking an ordinal number in modern Chinese.

- (3.19) 第一 第二 第十一
 dì-yī dì-èr dì-shíyī
 Ord-one Ord-two Ord-eleven
 “first” “second” “eleventh”

Chū- 初 as a bound root in modern Chinese literally means *beginning*. As a prefix, it can mark the first ten days of a lunar month. In (3.20) *chū-*, also used as a prefix, marks middle school, as well as various classes that they are equivalent to³ in the United States educational system.

- (3.20) 初一 初三 初十
 chū-yī chū-sān chū-shí
 first-one first-three first-ten
 “first day” “third day” “tenth day”

- (3.21) 初中 初一 初二 初三
 chū-zhōng chū-yī chū-èr chū-sān
 first-middle first-one first-two first-three
 “middle school” “7th grade” “8th grade” “9th grade”

3.2.2 *Suffixes*

Rhotacization was noted in section 2.3. It is, at the same time, a process of morphological operation that suffixes a diminutive *-er* to various elements of the language: *zhè* 这 DEM + *-er* 儿 → [zhèr] “this place,” *wán* 玩 “play” + *-er* → [wár] “play,” *běn* 本 CLASS. + *-er* → [bór] CLASS, etc. *-Zi* is another nominal suffix without a consistent meaning deriving from a bound root *zǐ* 子 that was once a free word meaning “child” in Classical Chinese. This morpheme is treated as a suffix rather than a bound root mostly because of its widespread usage and its neutral tone.

- (3.22) 儿子 梯子 桌子 钉子 兔子
 ér-zi tī-zi zhuō-zi dīng-zi tù-zi
 child-son ladder-son table-son nail-son rabbit-son
 “son” “ladder” “table” “nail” “rabbit”

Still another nominal suffix is *-xué* 学 “study” indicating schools or an academic discipline.

- (3.23) 中学 大学 化学 工学
 zhōng-xué dà-xué huà-xué gōng-xué
 mid-school big-school change-school work-school
 “middle school” “university” “chemistry” “engineering”
 语言学
 yǔyán-xué
 language-school
 “linguistics”

Standard Chinese has several suffixes functioning as nominalizers such as *-dù* 度 “degree,” *-huà* 化 “change,” *-yuán* 员 “-er,” and *-tóu* 头 “head.” *-Dù* is a suffix relating to a different degree of measure.

- (3.24) 尺度 速度 透明度 能见度
 chǐ-dù sù-dù tòu-míng-dù néng-jiàn-dù
 foot-degree fast-degree transparent-light-degree can-see-degree
 “yardstick” “speed” “transparency” “visibility”

-Huà denotes a change.

- (3.25) 老化 腐化 四化 现代化
 lǎo-huà fǔ-huà sì-huà xiàn-dài-huà
 old-change rotten-change four-change now-age-change
 “aging” “corruption” “four modernizations” “modernization”

-Yuán represents a person with a specialized duty.

- (3.26) 教员 职员 店员 警卫员
 jiào-yuán zhí-yuán diàn-yuán jǐng-wèi-yuán
 teach-er duty-er shop-er guard-protect-er
 “teacher” “staff worker” “salesman” “bodyguard”
 司令员
 sī-lìng-yuán
 manage-order-er
 “commander”

-*Tóu* is a free noun in standard Chinese referring to the head of a human body. As a suffix, it becomes a morpheme without an easily definable meaning or a clear tone.

- (3.27) 舌头 老头 工头 苦头 甜头
 shé-tou lǎo-tou gōng-tou kǔ-tou tián-tou
 tongue-head old-head work-head bitter-head sweet-head
 “tongue” “old man” “foreman” “suffering” “benefit”

Some of the Roots with a suffix can form new words when combined with other free morphemes such as the examples in (3.28). Nevertheless this compounding strategy is highly unpredictable and, in most cases, metaphorical in nature. For example, a *lion dance* is most likely performed by human beings who pretend to be lions. *Lion head*, actually named after a famous Shanghai dish, is meatballs made of pork cooked in soy sauce.

- (3.28) 狮子舞 狮子头 石头记 老虎钳
 shī-zi-wǔ shī-zi-tóu shí-tou-jì lǎo-hǔ-qián
 lion-son-dance lion-son-head rock-head-story old-tiger-pliers
 “lion dance” “meat-ball” “Story of the Stone” “pincer pliers”

3.2.3 Potential markers -de-得 and -bu-不 as infixes

An infix is a bound morpheme that is inserted into a word to derive a new word. There are two infixes in standard Chinese which indicate “possibility” -*de-* 得, or alternatively “impossibility” -*bu-* 不 in (3.29). Note that *kàn-jiàn* is a non-restrictive resultative verb compound with a Root–Root formation. As a derivational infix, -*de-* /-*bu-* can be inserted between the two Roots of this word (3.29b–c).

- (3.29) a. 看见他
 kàn-jiàn tā
 look-see 3rd
 “see him”
 b. 看得见他
 kàn-de-jiàn tā
 look-Pot-see 3rd
 “can see him”

- c. 看不见他
 kàn-bu-jiàn tā
 look-Neg-see 3rd
 “cannot see him”

Attainment resultative verb compounds also allow potential infixes such as *zhǎo-dào* in (3.30).

- (3.30) a. 找到他
 zhǎo-dào tā
 find-arrive 3rd
 “find him”
- b. 找得到他
 zhǎo-de-dào tā
 find-Pot-arrive 3rd
 “can find him”
- c. 找不到他
 zhǎo-bu-dào tā
 find-Neg-arrive 3rd
 “cannot find him”

The infixal *-de-* 得 historically is derived from its verbal uses meaning “to have/obtain” such as the examples in (3.31) that are still in use in standard Chinese.

- (3.31) a. 他得了病
 tā dé -le bìng
 3rd have -PFV sickness
 “He is ill.”
- b. 弟弟得了大奖
 dìdì dé -le dà-jǎng
 brother have -PFV big-prize
 “Younger brother got a big prize.”

Therefore, the string *(-)*de, depending on a given usage, cannot only be an infix but can also be a full verb. Moreover some Chinese compounds have a root–Root structure like *xiǎo-dé* 晓得 bright-get “to know” and *shě-dé* 舍得

abandon-possible “not to grudge,” in which *-dé* retains its Root verbal meaning *to get* in *xiǎo-dé* and its Root meaning, *possible*, as in *shě-dé*. Although both can be followed by an additional verb to form a complex predicate such as those in (3.32a and d) or by a negated verb such as those in (3.32b and e), the infixal *-bu-* can be inserted between *shě-* and *-dé* in (3.32e and f), but not between *xiǎo-* and *-dé* in (3.32c). This shows that *xiǎo-dé* functions more like the restrictive resultative compound observed in (3.8). 获得 *huò-dé* reap-get “obtain” is another example of this kind of restrictive resultative compound. Nevertheless, *shě-dé* exemplified by the statements in (3.32d–f) is an idiom chunk of a different kind, which allows the insertion of the negator *-bu-*, thus behaving more like a non-restrictive resultative compound such as *kàn-dé-jian* “can be seen” noted in (3.9). The ungrammatical sequence **shě-dé-dé* is perhaps due to the fact that the *-dé* in *shě-dé* already means *possible*, obviating the need for a second *dé* to occur continuously.

- (3.32) a. 他晓得很多
 tā xiǎo-dé hěn duō
 3rd bright-get very much
 “He knows a lot.”
- b. 他晓得不多
 tā xiǎo-dé bù duō
 3rd bright-get NEG much
 “He does not know much.”
- c. *他晓得不得
 tā xiǎo – bù-dé
 3rd bright-NEG-get NEG
- d. 他舍不得不买
 tā shě -dé bù mǎi
 3rd abandon-possible NEG buy
 “He does not grudge not to buy.” “He is capable of abandoning the purchase.”
- e. 他舍不得
 tā shě -bù-dé
 3rd abandon-NEG-get
 “He grudges.”

- f. 他舍不得买
 tā shě-bù-dé mǎi
 3rd abandon-NEG-possible buy
 “He grudges buying (something).”

As a matter of fact, 得 is a highly polysemous linguistic form in standard Chinese, and much of its complexity is related to its various uses with different grammatical statuses. For instance, **chī-liǎo* eat-finish 吃了 is an impossible verbal compound. But *chī* and *liǎo* can be used together with the infix-like *-bù-*, or *-dé-* in forming *chī-bù-liǎo* eat-NEG-finish “incapable of eating all” and *chī-dé-liǎo* “capable of eating all.” The unpredictability of the infixal *-de-* is further revealed by its intolerance of sequences like **chī-dé-bù-liǎo* eat-get-NEG-finish, or **chī-dé-hěn-liǎo* eat-get-very-finish in (3.33), whereas a similar sequence like *xiǎo-dé bù duō* is possible for *xiǎo-dé*.

- (3.33) a. 我吃得了
 b. *我吃得不了
 1st *chī-dé-bù-liǎo*
 c. *我吃得很了
 1st *chī-dé-hěn-liǎo*

Such a discrepancy can only be explained by the special feature of *bù-liǎo* and *dé-liǎo* sequences that are lexicalized, frozen idiom chunks following a verb with such distributional restrictions. This is further supported by a different trisyllabic idiom chunk in (3.34) in which *bù dé-liǎo* NEG get-finish that is formed by three morphemes, *bù*, *dé* and *liǎo*. The meaning is highly metaphorical and cannot be compositionally derived from the three morphemes.

- (3.34) 这回不得了!
 zhè-huí bù dé-liǎo le
 DEM-CL NEG get-finish Part.
 “This time (it will be) great!”

The idiosyncrasies of various compounds with *dé* perhaps came from all sorts of restrictions associated with the contexts in which they were coined

at different times in history. Therefore, not all the *dé* indicating possibility in modern Chinese are the same kind of infix.

3.3 Inflection-like affixes

Inflectional morphemes, unlike their unproductive derivational counterparts, typically attach to free words, all members of a given class of words, in a highly predictable manner (Bybee et al. 1994). Furthermore, they rarely change the grammatical category of their stems. Inflection-like affixes in Chinese are suffixes much like the plural marker for human nominals *-mén* 们, perfective aspect marker *-le* 了, experiential marker *-guo* 过 and the imperfective marker *-zhe* 着 for verbs.

The plural suffix *-mén* 们 only applies to human nouns and pronouns in an optional manner. Other Chinese nominals generally do not mark plurality.

- (3.35) 我们 人们 男人们 妇女们 孩子们
 wǒ-mén rén-mén nánrén-mén fùnǚ-mén háizi-mén
 1st-PL human-PL man-PL woman-PL child-PL
 “we” “people” “men” “women” “children”

The examples in (3.35–3.36) show that plural markers typically affix to disyllabic nominals and monosyllabic pronouns.

- (3.36) 朋友们 同学们 士兵们 *兵们
 péngyǒu-mén tóngxué-mén shìbīng-mén bīng-mén
 friend-PL student-PL soldier-PL soldier-PL
 “friends” “students” “soldiers”

3.3.1 Perfective marker *-le* 了

Modern Chinese does not have a grammatical marker of *tense* that relates an event (or a situation) to the time of speaking. For example, the past tense marker *-ed* in an English sentence like *I worked on a project* indicates the event of *my working on a project* happened before the time of speaking. In addition to tense, another common cross-linguistic type of verbal marker used in expressing temporal meanings is aspect. It is different from the notion of *tense*, as in English there is progressive aspect both in the past tense, such

as *was/were working*, and in the present tense, such as *is/am/are working*. Moreover, in the English sentence *I was working on a project when you first called* the first verbal form *was working*, or *be V+ing*, indicates a progressive aspect which, instead of relating the event to the time of speaking, presents it with respect to its own internal makeup, viewing it as ongoing at the reference time *when you first called*.

In Chinese the marker that is closest to the notion of past tense, and actually taken to be so by some, is the verbal suffix *-le*. However, the examples in (3.37) demonstrate that it is not really a past-tense marker as it can be used grammatically in either a past event (3.37a) or a future event (3.37b).

- (3.37) a. 我昨天下了课就回家。
 wǒ zuó-tiān xià -le kè jiù huí-jīā
 1st past-day down-PFV class then return-home
 “Yesterday I got out of school and then came home.”
- b. 我明天下了课就回家。
 wǒ míng-tiān xià -le kè jiù huí-jīā
 1st next-day down-PFV class then return home
 “Tomorrow I will get out of school and then come home.”

-Le is really an aspect marker presenting a viewpoint of an event in its entirety⁴ (Comrie 1976, Li and Thompson 1981), as it is commonly used in a series of bounded events. Li and Thompson show that an event can be bounded by being a quantified event (3.38), being a definite, or specific, event (3.39), being the inherent meaning of the situation (3.40), or being the first event in a series (3.37).

- (3.38) a. 他吃了两碗饭。
 tā chī-le liǎng-wǎn fàn
 3rd eat-PFV two-CL rice
 “He ate two bowls of rice.”
- b. 陆战队员退了几里地。
 lù -zhàn-duì-yuán tuì -le jǐ -lǐ dì
 land-fight-team-er back-PFV several-CL ground
 “The marines drew back up for several miles.”

- c. 他好像胖了一点。

tā hǎo-xiàng pàng-le yī-diǎn

3rd good-like fat-PFV one-bit

“He seemingly has gained a little (weight).”

The events in (3.38) are all bounded with a quantifiable object such as *two bowls of rice* in (3.38a), *several miles* in (3.38b), and *a little* in (3.38c). Alternatively, the events can also be bounded with a definite nominal object, be it a proper name (3.39a), a pronoun (3.39b), a modifier (3.39c), or a relative clause (3.39d).

- (3.39) a. 我找到了小李。

wǒ zhǎo-dào-le xiǎo Lǐ

1st find-arrive-PFV little-Name

“I found Xiao Li.”

- b. 你害了他

nǐ hài -le tā

2nd harm-PFV 3rd

“You hurt him.”

- c. 他买了微软的股票

tā mǎi -le wēi -ruǎn de gǔ -piào

3rd buy-PFV micro-soft REL share-ticket

“He bought Microsoft stock.”

- d. 我玩了他送给我的电子游戏

wǒ wán-le tā sòng-gě i wǒ -de diàn -zi yóu-xì

1st play-PFV 3rd give-give 1st Rel. electric-son play-game

“I played the computer games that he gave me.”

The sentences in (3.40) are inherently bounded because of the resultative verb compound *dǎ-pò* in (3.40a) and the semantics of some verbs like *sǐ* “die” in (3.40b) that entail an endpoint for the event.

- (3.40) a. 把杯子打破了

bǎ bēi-zi dǎ-pò-le

BA cup-son hit-break-PFV

“(He) broke the cup.”

- b. 他昨天死了
 tā zuó-tiān sǐ-le
 3rd past-day die-PFV
 “He died yesterday.”

In bounded situations, inherent or non-inherent, the perfective marker *-le* can occur felicitously. However, in an unbound situation, *-le* is inappropriate. Without the quantifying numeral classifier *two bowls* for the grammatical sentence in (3.38a), the unbound event in (3.41a) is ungrammatical. Similarly, if the sentences in (3.37) are not bound by a following event like *then come home*, they are ungrammatical such as the one in (3.41b).

- (3.41) a. *他吃了饭
 tā chī-le fàn
 3rd eat-PFV rice
 b. *他下了课
 tā xià -le kè
 3rd down-PFV class

Smith (1994) proposed a temporal schema to account for the perfective meaning in standard Chinese:

- (3.42) *-le* perfective
 I F_{Arb}
 //////////////

Normally, sentences which contain a perfective marker have an initial endpoint (I) and a final endpoint (F). The slashes in the bottom of (3.42) represent the span of the viewpoint. Perfective *-le* presents closed non-stative situations focusing a single point or an arbitrary final endpoint (F_{Arb}) depending on the situation type (See Smith 1994). Therefore, the perfective aspect marker *-le* cannot occur in situations that do not allow an endpoint. For example, in (3.43) with the perfective marker, grammatical sentences like *tā shì lǎo-shī* “he is a teacher,” *tā xìng lǐ* “he is named Li” and *tā xiàng bāba* “he looks like his father” would be made grammatically incorrect with the addition of the perfective marker. Other similar verbs include *xǐhuān* 喜欢 “to like,” and *yǐwéi* 以为 “to think.”

- (3.43) a. *他是了老师
 tā shì-le lǎo-shī
 3rd be-PFV old-master
- b. *他姓了李⁵
 tā xìng-le lǐ
 3rd name-PFV Name
- c. *他象了爸爸
 tā xiàng -le bāba
 3rd resemble-PFV father

3.3.2 *Experiential marker -guo 过*

Chinese experiential marker *-guo* is semantically distinct from the perfective marker. Chao (1968) noticed that it refers to a class of events that happened at least once in the past, such as the sentence in (3.44), in which the class of events such as *going to China* must have happened at least once.

- (3.44) 我去过中国
 wǒ qù-guo zhōng-guó
 1st go-EXP middle-state
 “I have been to China.”

The second remarkable feature of the experiential marker is that it can only occur in events that are repeatable (Ma 1977). For example, the discovery of a new continent by the same person normally happens only once, and, therefore, it does not allow the use of an experiential marker in (3.45a).

- (3.45) a. *哥伦布发现过美洲大陆
 gēlún bù fā -xiàn -guo měizhōu dà-lù
 Columbus find-appear-EXP America big-land
- b. 哥伦布发现了美洲大陆
 gēlún bù fā -xiàn -le měizhōu dà-lù
 Columbus find-appear-PFV America big-land
 “Columbus discovered the American continent.”

Li and Thompson (1981) also observe that in presenting a series of events the perfective *-le* is used, instead of the experiential *-guo* such as example (3.46) shows.

- (3.46) a. 我吃了饭, 看了一会电视, 就睡觉了。
 wǒ chī-le fàn, kàn-le yí -huì diàn -shì, jiù shuì -jiào le.
 1st eat-PFV rice, see-PFV one-CL electric-view, then
 sleep-sleep PFV
 “I ate, watched a bit of TV, and then went to bed.”
- b. *我吃过饭, 看过一会电视, 就睡觉了。
 wǒ chī-guo fàn, kàn-guo yí -huì diàn -shì, jiù shuì -jiào
 1st eat-EXP rice, see-EXP one-CL electric-view, then
 sleep-sleep PFV

Yeh (1996) notes that when there is a habitual adverbial in the sentence, the occurrence of an experiential marker is not tolerated. For instance, the adverbial *chángcháng* “often”, (3.47b) is ungrammatical.

- (3.47) a. 他喝过茅台酒
 tā hē -guo máo-tái jiǔ
 3rd drink-EXP straw-stage liquor
 “He had drunk Maotai liquor before (a type of strong liquor).”
- b. *他常常喝过茅台酒
 tā chángcháng hē -guo máo-tái jiǔ
 3rd often drink-EXP straw-stage liquor
- c. 他以前喝过茅台酒
 tā yǐ-qián hē -guo máo -tái jiǔ
 3rd for-past drink-EXP straw-stage liquor
 “He has drunk Maotai liquor before.”

The schema that Smith (1994) proposes to characterize the meaning of the Chinese experiential marker is given in (3.48):

- (3.48) Experiential *-guo*
 I F_{Arb} F+1
 //////////////////////////////////

The schema shows that the experiential construction presents a prior situation not only as closed but also with a change of state subsequent to the final point that is marked by F+1. Smith also observes that the experiential ascribes to a subject the property of having experienced the event, rather than presenting the event directly.

3.3.3 Imperfective marker *-zhe* 着

The imperfective marker *-zhe* with a neutral tone derives from the resultative verb compounds (Sun 2005) that still exist in modern Chinese such as the one in *zhǎo-zháo* 找着 (3.49) in which the word on the right, *zháo* with a diphthong and a second tone, functions like a phase marker indicating completion or attainment of the action symbolized by the verb on the left such as *zhǎo*- “to find” in (3.49).

- (3.49) 我找着他了
 wǒ zhǎo-zháo tā le
 1st find-found 3rd PFV
 “I found him (finally).”

For this reason, the basic meaning of the imperfective marker *-zhe* is to indicate a resultant state (Smith 1994). The examples in (3.50) are all stative in nature and are translated into English approximates as English does not have this kind of grammatical marker.

- (3.50) a. 墙上挂着很多照片
 qiáng-shang guà -zhe hěn-duō zhào -piàn
 wall -up hang-IMP very-many picture-sheet
 “Many photos are hanging on the wall.”
- b. 他们俩好着呢
 tā-mén liǎng hǎo-zhe ne
 3rd-PL two good-IMP PRT
 “The two of them are very good (friends).”
- c. 地上印着他的手印
 dì-shang yìn-zhe tā-de shǒu-yìn
 ground-up print-IMP 3rd REL hand-print
 “His handprint is printed on the ground.”

Furthermore, a Chinese imperfective marker like *-zhe* does not occur with predicates that do not have a temporary nature, or the so-called stage-level predicates (Yeh 1993). In other words, stage-level predicates (or situations) typically refer to situations that are taken to be temporary, or easily changeable. Stative predicates like *yǒu* 有 “to have” and *gāo* 高 “tall” in (3.51) that depict a permanent stative situation cannot be used with the resultative, imperfective marker for the lack of temporary property.

- (3.51) a. 他有钱
 tā yǒu qián
 3rd have money
 “He has money.”
- b. *他有着钱
- c. 他很高
 tā hěn gāo
 3rd very tall
 “He is very tall.”
- d. *他高着

The imperfective *-zhe* should also be distinguished from the progressive marker *-zai* 在 that is adverbial in nature. For example, both sentences in (3.52a and b) are good with *-zhe* in (3.52a) indicating a resultative state and the adverbial *zai* indicating an event in progress.

- (3.52) a. 他穿着皮鞋
 tā chuān-zhe pí-xié
 3rd wear-IMP leather-shoe
 “He wears leather shoes.”
- b. 他在穿皮鞋
 tā zài chuān pí-xié
 3rd PROG Wear leather-shoe
 “He is putting on leather-shoes.”

Frequently, the imperfective *-zhe* appears in the subordinate clauses of complex sentences to give the background of a situation. For example, whereas in (3.53a) it is possible to subordinate *wearing shoes* as an ongoing state with the imperfective *-zhe*, it is, nevertheless, impossible to do so with the

progressive *zài* as it does not make sense to imply that one can possibly engage in an activity, such as dancing, while another activity like *putting on the shoes* is in progress. The main predicate in (3.53c) is *shàng-kè* “teach,” and *-zhe* functions to mark the background to the state of standing while the subject delivers the lecture.

- (3.53) a. 他穿着皮鞋跳舞
 tā chuān-zhe pí -xié tiào -wǔ
 3rd wear-IMP leather-shoe jump-dance
 “He danced when he was wearing leather shoes.”
- b. *他在穿皮鞋跳舞
 tā zài chuān pí -xié tiào-wǔ
 3rd PROG wear leather-shoe jump-dance
- c. 他总是站着上课
 tā zǒng-shì zhàn-zhe shàng-kè
 3rd ever-be stand-IMP up-class
 “He always stands while teaching (his) classes.”

When the imperfective marker is attached to the main predicate, it should have an ongoing interpretation of the main clause (Smith 1994). For example, in (3.54), *-zhe* can co-occur with *zhèng(zài)*, the progressive marker, to focus the ongoing state of the subject when *I looked for him*.

- (3.54) 我找他的时候, 他正(在)忙着呢
 wǒ zhǎo tā-de shí-hòu, tā zhèng(zài) máng-zhe ne
 1st find 3rd-REL time-time, 3rd right PROG busy-IMP ne
 “When I looked for him, he was very busy.”

Smith (1994) then characterizes the Chinese imperfective meaning with a schema presented in (3.55) as a marker providing for an internal or resultant focus that is stative in nature without including the initial point.

- (3.55) The imperfective *-zhe*
 I
 ///+State

3.4 Summary

Chinese words can be monosyllabic free morphemes or disyllabic compound words composed of free or bound roots, derivation-like morphemes, or inflection-like morphemes. Although some of them such as the verb-object type compound *guān-xīn* close-heart ‘to concern’ and various ways of involving the polysemous *dé* may not be fully accounted for without going beyond the word level, in general Chinese words can be placed in a continuum (3.56) representing at one end those that are most lexical, free morphemes and at the other end those that are most grammatical, bound morphemes.

(3.56)

The lexical/grammatical status of Chinese words

	Most lexical			Most grammatical
monosyllabic		compound		derivation-like inflection-like
找 <i>zhǎo</i>	讨论 <i>tǎo-lùn</i>	看到 <i>kàn-dào</i>	老 <i>lǎo-</i>	头 <i>-tóu</i> 了 <i>-le</i>
‘to look for’	‘to discuss’	‘to see’	‘familiarity’	‘head’ PFV
etc.	etc.		etc.	etc.

At the most lexical end of the continuum in (3.56), there are monosyllabic words epitomized by the lexical verb *zhǎo* 找. Chinese compounds are normally formed by free, or bound, roots. But the attainment of resultative verbal compounds symbolized by *kàn-dào* 看到 in (3.56) can be viewed as borderline cases as the second morpheme *-dào* in this type of compound is closer to the derivation-like morphemes as it belongs to a closed set of morphemes like *hǎo* 好, *wán* 完, *dào* 到, indicating attainment of the action signified by the preceded verbal morpheme. However, they are not categorized as derivation-like morphemes because of their ability to function as morphologically free, lexical verbs in other contexts and their low degree of productivity. The derivation-like morphemes, including prefixes, infixes, and suffixes such as *lǎo-* 老 and *-tóu* 头 in (3.56), are mostly morphologically bound morphemes, retaining a high degree of unpredictability and low degree of productivity. Compounds and roots with derivation-like morphemes that are disyllabic in nature represent 61% of the most commonly used 3,000 Chinese words (Lü 1984). The most grammatical morphemes are the three inflectional morphemes indicating verbal aspects, i.e., *-le* perfective aspect, *-guo* experiential aspect, and *-zhe* imperfective aspect and the plural marker *-men* for human nominals.

NOTES

1. Here no distinction is made between bound-root verb and free-word verb, as they are not significantly different in this respect.
2. Li and Thompson (1981) divided the resultative compounds into four semantic types: cause, achievement, direction, and phase (54–7).
3. In Senior High, 10th grade, 11th grade, and 12th grade are 高一 high-one, 高二 high-two, and 高三 high-three respectively.
4. The suffixal *-le* is to be distinguished from the sentence-final *-le* which is a clitic indicating perfect aspect.
5. This is a good sentence in a situation when a woman changes her name after marrying a man by following the customary practice of a culture.

4 Chinese morphology 2

The previous chapter focused on the formation of Chinese compounds, derivation-like and inflection-like morphologies, word-forming strategies that are word-like. It was nevertheless noted that the boundaries of a Chinese *word* are not equivocal. Some compounds such as *guān-xīn* 关心 close-heart “to be concerned” behave more like a compound than others such as *chàng gē* 唱歌 “to sing.” The idiosyncratic uses relating to the infixal, potential marker *-de* 得- also suggest that the polysemous (*-*)*de* may actually be homophonous but grammatically different forms. In this second chapter on Chinese morphology, focus will be given to phrasal particles, or clitics, and evidence showing that Chinese words and phrases are closely connected. In order to develop a fuller understanding of Chinese grammar, one must investigate and study the links between speech sounds, syntax, semantics, and discourse factors in forming Chinese words in actual communication.

4.1 Clitics

Clitics are linguistic particles with an ambiguous status between affixes and words (Halpern 1998: 101), as they are not attached to stems but are positioned within some syntactic categories such as noun phrases and verb phrases in Chinese. They should include the relative marker *de* 的 of a noun phrase (see chapter 7), some usages of *de* 得 relating to its function in marking potentiality and the adverbial marker *de* 地. In this section the focus will be on clitics and morphological changes such as sentence-final particles, locative particles, and reduplications. These are morphological processes operating beyond the word level.

4.1.1 Sentence-final particles

Sentence-final particles are treated as clitics located at the end of a sentence and are usually untoned clitics of the sentence they belong to. Their usage

is normally determined by a host of discourse factors relating to speaker intentions, speaker–hearer relationship, etc. The following are some common sentence-final particles in standard Chinese: *ne* 呢, *ba* 吧, *a/ya* 啊, and *ma* 吗.

Sentences in (4.1) show that *ma* is a question marker indicating a yes/no question at the end of a sentence.

- (4.1) a. 你去吗?
 nǐ qù ma
 2nd go Q
 “Do you go?”
- b. 你吃日本菜吗?
 nǐ chī rìběn cài ma
 2nd eat Japan food Q
 “Do you eat Japanese food?”
- c. 你喜欢她吗?
 nǐ xǐ-huān tā ma
 2nd happy-joy 3rd Q
 “Do you like her?”

呢 *ne* at the end of a declarative sentence functions to express the speaker’s response to some claim, expectation (4.2a), or belief on the part of the hearer (4.2b) (Li and Thompson 1981). On hearing the news that *Xiǎo Zhāng* has already given birth to five children, *ne* in (4.2a) marks the speaker’s surprise at hearing *she has given birth to five children!* The sentence in (4.2b) shows that *ne* is commonly used together with the imperfective marker *-zhe* demonstrating the belief on the part of the hearer about an on-going state of affairs. *Ne* can also mark a question with some expectation such as the one in (4.2c) in which the sentence-final *ne* indicates the speaker’s expectation that the hearer should do something in connection with the speaker’s claim of imminent departure.

- (4.2) a. 小张都生了五个孩子呢!
 Xiǎo-zhāng dōu shēng-le wǔ-ge hái-zi ne
 small-name all bear-PFV 5-CL child-son EX
 “Xiao Zhang has already given birth to five children!”

- b. 他们吃得慢着呢!
 tā-mén chī-de-màn-zhe ne
 3rd-PL eat-POT-slow-IMP EX
 “They eat unbelievably slowly!”
- c. 我马上去, 你呢?
 wǒ mǎ-shàng jiù qù, nǐ ne
 1st horse-up then go, you EX-Q
 “I will go immediately, and you?”
- d. 你喜欢不喜欢她呢?
 nǐ xǐ-huān bù xǐ-huān tā ne
 2nd happy-joy NEG happy-joy 3rd EX-Q
 “Do you still like her?”
- e. *你喜欢不喜欢她吗?
 nǐ xǐ-huān bù xǐ-huān tā ma
 2nd happy-joy NEG happy-joy 3rd EX-Q

In (4.2e) *ma* as a neutral question marker of a yes/no question maintains a complementary distribution with another yes/no question, i.e., A-Not-A question-type, such as *xǐ-huān bù xǐ-huān*. A simple yes/no question normally cannot be marked twice by A-Not-A and *ma*. However, *ne* as a question marker with some additional expectation implied can co-occur grammatically with an A-Not-A question. The sentence in (4.2d) will be good if spoken after the speaker tells the hearer all sorts of horrible stories about the person about whom the hearer had indicated some liking and expects the hearer to change his or her mind after hearing the negative comments.

吧 *ba* is a sentence-final particle, according to Li and Thompson (1981), that can be best translated into English as some type of tag question *don't you think so* or *wouldn't you agree?* It functions to solicit agreement (thus marked as SA) from the hearer (4.3a) or to show approval on the part of the speaker (4.3b). The sentence in (4.3b) should fit a context in which the speaker is under some constraint, such as having to drive soon, and shows he is allowing himself to drink just half a cup so that he will not become too drunk to drive.

- (4.3) a. 我们走吧
 wǒ-mén zǒu ba
 1st-PL walk SA
 “Let’s go!”
 “*Shall we go?”
- b. 我就喝半杯酒吧
 wǒ jiù hē bàn-bēi jiǔ ba
 1st then drink half-cup liquor SA
 “I then drink half a cup.”
 “I will then just drink half a cup, OK?”

Furthermore, in normal situations the sentence-final *ba* is not used to mark yes/no questions. However, when it is realized with a rising tone, it could be used as a question seeking approval from the hearer.

啊 *a* or 呀 *ya* are synonymous sentence-final particles functioning primarily to reduce the forcefulness (thus marked as RF in the following) of an order (Li and Thompson 1981) such as the one in (4.4a). When the preceding syllable ends with [a], [e], [i], [o], or [y], *ya* 呀 is used. The sound represented by the letter *a* is realized as *wa* when the preceding syllable ends with [u], [ao], or [ou] such as *hǎo wa* 好啊! “Good.” To soften the degree of directedness, these particles are frequently used in question-type sentences as well (4.4b and c). They differ from neutral questions in that hearers may feel obligated to reply to these nicely toned, or somewhat seductively raised, questions.

- (4.4) a. 你来呀!
 nǐ lái ya
 2nd come RF
 “Please come!”
- b. 你到哪儿去呀?
 nǐ dào nǎ-er qù ya
 2nd dao where go RF
 “Where are you going?”
- c. 你去不去呀?
 nǐ qù bù qù ya
 2nd go bu go RF
 “Are you going?”

- d. 来呀! 你呀, 还是去吧!
 lái ya nǐ ya, hǎi-shì qù ba
 come RF 2nd Top, still-be go SA
 “Come!” “You, you should go!”

In (4.4d) the two morphemes *lái ya* can occur together softly to persuade the hearer to come over. *Ya/a* can also be used as a kind of topic marker at the beginning of a sentence.

呕 *ou* is still another sentence-final particle occurring at the end of a sentence signaling a friendly warning. Li and Thompson (1981) observe that this particle tends to occur frequently in the conversation between adults and young children.

- (4.5) a. 小心呕
 xiǎo -xīn ou
 small -heart FW
 “Be careful, OK?”
- b. 好好做功课呕
 hǎo -hào zuò gōng -kè ou
 good -good do exercise -work FW
 “Do homework carefully, OK?”

In examples like the one in (4.2b) *-zhe* 着 is an imperfective marker indicating a resultative state (see chapter 3). However, for historical reasons (Sun 1998), it is also used, typically in sentence-final position, after an activity verb as an inchoative marker in imperative sentences. The focus of the sentences in (4.6) is for the hearers to get into a different state of affairs, thus a marker of inchoative aspect.

- (4.6) a. 你听着!
 nǐ tīng zhe
 2nd listen INC
 “Listen!”
- b. 你替我拿着!
 nǐ tì wǒ ná zhe
 2nd for 1st hold INC.
 “Hold it for me!”

The sentence-final *-le* as a perfect-aspect marker, (Li and Thompson 1981) is also to be distinguished from the homophonous suffixal perfective marker *-le*. It is primarily a perfect marker indicating a change of state (4.7d) or a currently relevant state (CRS) (4.7a) (Li and Thompson 1981). As was noted earlier, the sentence in (4.7b) is semantically unbound and, therefore, ungrammatical because a perfective marker typically occurs in a bounded situation. The perfect marker in sentence-final position like (4.7a) bounds the situation through signaling the event as relevant to the time of speaking. In other words, the situation is bounded by speech time. The Chinese perfect-aspect marker (Li and Thompson 1981) also signals a new situation such as the one in (4.7d), marking the situation signified by the main predicate to be desirable.

- (4.7) a. 他吃了饭了
 tā chī -le fàn -le
 3rd eat -PFV rice CRS
 “He has eaten.”
- b. *他吃了饭
- c. 他吃饭了
 tā chī fàn -le
 3rd eat rice CRS
 “He wants to eat now.” Or “He has eaten.”
- d. 吃饭了
 chī fàn -le
 eat rice CRS
 “Time to eat!”

It is rather difficult to distinguish between the suffixal *-le* and sentence-final *le* when an intransitive verb is not followed by a noun, thus making many students of Chinese think that there is only one *-le*. However, when a noun phrase follows a transitive verb like the sentences in (4.7b and c), it is clear that the two phonetically identical (*-le*) are syntactically and semantically distinguishable from each other. Whereas an unbounded event (4.7b) cannot co-occur with the suffixal *-le* which is a perfective marker, the sentence-final *le* in (4.7c and d) marks a currently relevant situation. With speech time as the

endpoint of the event, the sentence in (4.7a) is thus bounded with the perfect marker. The sentence in (4.7c) without the perfective marker is correct, and perfect-aspect marker suggests a new situation that is relevant to the speech time.

Furthermore, the word order between the sentence-final *le* and other sentence-final particles is rigid as it always precedes the other particles. Thus, in Chinese there are contracted forms in sentence-final positions such as *le* 了 + *a* 啊 → *-la* 啦 in (8a) and *le* 了 + *ou* 呕 → *lou* 喽 in (4.8b) (Zhu 1982).

- (4.8) a. 吃饭啦!
 chī fan la
 eat rice CRS+RF
 “Time to eat.”
- b. 睡觉喽!
 shuì-jìào lou
 sleep-sleep CRS + FW
 “Time to sleep.” (with a tinge of threatening)

Finally, there is still another sentence-final frozen expression like *lái-zhe* come-IMP that is commonly used in standard Chinese to refer to an immediate past event.

- (4.9) a. 你干什么来着?
 nǐ gàn shén-me lái-zhe
 2nd do what-thing come-IMP
 “What did you do?”
- b. 我刚到图书馆来着
 wǒ gāng dào tú-shū-guǎn lái-zhe
 1st just arrive picture-book-house come-IMP
 “I was just back from the library.”

4.1.2 Locative particles

Chinese nominals frequently co-occur with a closed class of locative particles like *shàng* 上 “up,” *xià* 下 “down,” *lǐ* 里 “amid,” *wài* 外 “outside,” and *nèi*

内 “inside,” marking a regular nominal as a location-denoting, spatial term. Previously, these particles have been treated by some (Li and Thompson 1981) as postpositions. But Liu (1998) argues that they should be properly treated as noun-phrase markers, or clitics, attaching to the end of a noun phrase, as they are not attached to stems but take the entire noun phrase as their domain, are located by reference to the last element of the noun phrase, and follow that element immediately. Liu’s position will be followed here. In Chinese most concrete nouns may not be used to indicate a location for lack of specificity. Therefore, depending on the semantic nature of the head noun of a noun phrase, a locative particle must be selected in accord with a specificity condition that necessitates all location-denoting noun phrases specifically marked. For example, *shān* 山 “mountain” is a concrete noun but semantically not specific enough to denote a location. When it is used after a preposition *zài* “at” that calls for a location-denoting nominal after it, **zài shān* without a locative particle is grammatically incorrect. Thus, it needs a locative particle to specify a given location consistent with a given context, such as *zài shān shàng* 山上 hill-up “on top of the hill,” *zài shān xià* 山下 hill-down “at the bottom of the hill,” *zài shān lǐ* 山里 hill-amid “in the hill,” and *zài shān wài* 山外 hill-out “out of the hill.” The selection of a locative particle can be quite arbitrary (see chapter 7). For example, the nominal *fáng* “house” can co-occur with all of the above to show a certain bearing such as *fáng lǐ* 房里 house-amid, *fáng nèi* 房内 house-inside, *fáng wài* 房外 house-outside, *fáng shàng* 房上 house-up, *fáng xià* 房下 house-down; however, whereas *huà shàng* 画上 picture-up “in the picture” is arbitrarily acceptable, **huà xià* 画下 picture-down is not.

It has also been observed that some Chinese existential verbs require a locative phrase to precede them (Huang 1987, Liu 1998) such as those in (4.10). The sentences in (4.10a and b) show that with the copular *shì* as the verb of the sentence, the preceding nominal must co-occur with a non-spatial nominal like *shìjìè* “world.” However, the opposite is true when the verb of the sentence is an existential verb like *méiyǒu* in (4.10c). The reason is that some existential verbs like *méiyǒu* select a location-denoting nominal that can be a non-spatial nominal with a locative particle like *shì-jìè-shàng* (4.10c), a locative prepositional phrase such as the one in (4.10e), or a nominal with a modifier such as demonstrative *zhè-ge* that functions to specify the uniqueness of the nominal.

- (4.10) a. 世界是你们的
 shì -jiè shì nǐ-men de
 world -border be 2nd-men POS
 “The world is yours.”
- b. *世界上是你们的
 shì -jiè -shàng shì nǐ-men de
 world-border-up be 2nd-men POS
- c. 世界上没有无缘无故的爱
 shì -jiè -shàng méiyǒu wú-yuán-wú -gù de ài
 world -border -up NEG no-reason-no -origin POS love
 “There is no such thing in the world as love without reason or cause.”
- d. *世界没有无缘无故的爱
 shì -jiè méiyǒu wú-yuán-wú -gù de ài
 world-border -up NEG no-reason-no -origin POS love
- e. 在世界上没有无缘无故的爱
 zài shì -jiè -shàng méiyǒu wú-yuán-wú -gù
 PREP world -border -up NEG no-reason-no -origin
 de ài
 POS love
 “There is no such thing in the world as love without reason or cause.”
- f. 这个世界没有无缘无故的爱
 zhè-ge shì -jiè méiyǒu wú-yuán-wú -gù de ài
 DEM-CL world -border NEG no-reason-no -origin POS love
 “There is no such thing in the world as love without reason or cause.”

The above examples show how Chinese concrete nouns can be transformed in a location-denoting nominal. There are two other types of nouns that a student needs to be aware of in learning about Chinese locative phrases. The examples in (4.11a) show that there are nominals that are inherently location-denoting like *měiguó* 美国 “the United States.” No locative particle can be used after it when co-occurring with the preposition *zài*. Essentially all place names, such as *zhōngguó* 中国 “China,” *yīngguó* 英国 “United Kingdom,” *jiāzhōu* 加州

“California,” and *Běijīng* 北京 “Beijing,” belong to this class of nominals. The examples in (4.11b) show that a non-spatial denoting nominal like *fángjiān* “room” must be marked by a locative particle to meet the specificity condition for a location-denoting nominal after the preposition *zài*. The examples in (4.11c) show that there is a third type of nominals like *xué-xiào* 学校 “school,” *tú-shū-guǎn* 图书馆 “library,” and *jiā* 家 “home,” that can function either as location-denoting spatial nominals or as non-spatial nominals, as they can optionally co-occur with a locative particle. This small set of nouns usually consists of nominals referring to the places that are easily identifiable by the speakers/hearers, obviating the necessary specificity condition.

- (4.11) a. 在美国 *在美国内
 zài měi-guó zài měi-guó-nèi
 in pretty-state in pretty-state-inside
 “in America”
- b. *在房间 在房间内
 zài fáng-jiān zài fáng-jiān-nèi
 in house-room in house-room-inside
 “inside a room”
- c. 在学校里 在学校
 zài xué-xiào-lǐ zài xué-xiào
 in learn-school-inside in learn-school
 “at school” “at school”

Some disyllabic words such as *shàngmiàn* “on top of,” *xiàmiàn* “in the bottom of” in (4.12) can behave just like a place name in denoting a location. Other words like this include trisyllabic words, *huǒ-chē-zhàn* 火车站 “train station,” *bàn-gōng-shì* 办公室 “office,” etc.

- (4.12) a. 在上面看得远
 zài shàng-miàn kàn-de-yuǎn
 prep up-face see-Pot-far
 “One can see far on the top.”
- b. 在下面人多
 zài xià-miàn rén duō
 prep down-face person many
 “There are many people down below.”

In other words, the specificity condition for a location-denoting nominal in locative noun phrases can be satisfied in three ways:

- a. use of a place name (4.11a) or a location-denoting nominal (4.12);
- b. use of a locative particle after a non-location denoting nominal (4.11b);
- c. use of a modifier that will specify the uniqueness of a non-location denoting nominal (4.10f).

However, the disyllabic location-denoting nominals like *shàngmiàn* “on top of” or *xiàmiàn* “in the bottom of” in (4.12) are ambiguous and can function just like a locative particle. The sentences in (4.13) and (4.14) show that a non-spatial noun with a locative particle *shàng* or *shàngmiàn*, does not refer to the same location as the location-denoting *shàngmiàn*. *Bào-zhǐ* 报纸 “newspaper” is a non-spatial nominal and must co-occur with a locative particle (4.13e and 4.14e) after the preposition *zài*. Furthermore, the sentence in (4.13b) demonstrates that a shorter form *bào shàng* with a locative particle can fill a location-denoting position equally well. However, the location-denoting *shàngmiàn* after the relative marker *de* in (4.13d) is unacceptable, although the one in (4.13c) without the relative marker *de* is acceptable. The relative marker defines *shàngmiàn* in (4.13d) as a location-denoting nominal. The usage is incorrect because the nominal reading for *shàngmiàn* denotes the top of the newspaper, not the news reported in the newspaper. Nevertheless, the clitic *shàng* conveys a different location that is not the top of the newspaper, but in the newspaper, as in (4.13a and b).

- (4.13) a. 在报纸上有条大新闻
 zài bào-zhǐ shàng yǒu tiǎo dà xīn-wén
 PREP report-paper up have CL big new-hear
 “There is an important piece of news in the newspaper.”
- b. 在报上有篇条大新闻
 zài bào shàng yǒu tiáo dà xīn-wén
 PREP report up have CL big new-hear
 “There is an important piece of news in the newspaper.”
- c. 在报纸上面有条大新闻
 zài bào -zhǐ shàng-miàn yǒu tiáo dà xīn-wén
 PREP report-paper up -face have CL big new-hear
 “There is an important piece of news in the newspaper.”

- d. *在报纸的上面有条大新闻
 zài bào -zhǐ de shàng-miàn yǒu tiáo dà xīn-wén
 PREP report-paper-REL up -face have CL big new-hear
 “There is an important piece of news in the newspaper.”
- e. *在报纸有条大新闻
 zài bào -zhǐ yǒu tiáo dà xīn-wén
 PREP report -paper have CL big new-hear

Such an analysis finds support in the sentences in (4.14). In contrast to the sentence in (4.13d) which does not allow the *in the paper* reading for *shàngmiàn*, the sentences in (4.14c and d) do not allow the *on top of* reading for *shàng*. Without the relative marker *de*, *shàngmiàn* can function like a locative particle meaning *in the paper* in (4.13c). With *a pen* as the object the locative particle *shàng* in (4.14) fails to provide a relevant location that *a pen* is likely to be placed, as it is quite impossible for a pen to be placed between the lines in the newspaper as the clitic implies; therefore, the examples in (4.14 c and d) are ungrammatical. The sentence in (4.14e) shows that the NP *bàozhǐ* without the clitic *shàng* cannot follow the preposition *zài* all by itself.

- (4.14) a. 在报纸的上面有枝笔
 zài bào -zhǐ de shàng-miàn yǒu zhī bǐ
 PREP report-paper REL up -face have CL pen
 “There is a pen on the newspaper.”
- b. 在报纸上面有枝笔
 zài bào -zhǐ shàng-miàn yǒu zhī bǐ
 PREP report-paper up -face have CL pen
 “There is a pen on the newspaper.”
- c. *在报上有枝笔
 zài bào -shàng yǒu zhī bǐ
 PREP report-up have CL pen
- d. *在报纸上有枝笔
 zài bào -zhǐ shàng yǒu zhī bǐ
 PREP report-paper-up have CL pen
- e. *在报纸有枝笔
 zài bào -zhǐ yǒu zhī bǐ
 PREP report -paper have CL pen

At least two arguments can be found to show that the locative particles are not the head of a noun phrase or forming a discontinuous adpositional phrase with the preposition *zài*. First, the selectional constraint of a classifier is completely determined by the nominal before a locative particle as is evidenced by the co-occurrences between the classifiers *běn*, *tiáo* and the nouns *shū*, *chuán* respectively in (4.15). Therefore, it is the head noun of the noun phrase that selects an appropriate classifier that has nothing to do with the locative particle directly.

- (4.15) 在这本书上 在这条船上
 zài zhè běn shū shàng zài zhè tiáo chuán shàng
 prep DEM CL book-up prep DEM CL boat-up
 “in this book” “in this boat”

Secondly in sentence (4.16a) the preposition *zài* is followed by two conjoined noun phrases, *xuéxiào*, a nominal of the optional class, and *jiā lǐ* a nominal followed by the locative clitic *lǐ*. Therefore, they are structurally parallel. The possibility for *zài xuéxiào* to occur grammatically as a prepositional phrase without a locative particle demonstrates that *zài* is a preposition that does not have to build a prepositional phrase with a discontinuous locative particle. Furthermore, as *jiā* falls into the optional class of nominals that can be used grammatically with or without a locative particle such as the one in (4.16), it then follows that clitics are not the head of a noun phrase.

- (4.16) a. 我孩子在学校和家里都不乖
 wǒ hái-zi zài xué-xiào hé jiā-lǐ dōu bù guāi
 1st child-son PREP study-school and home-inside all NEG
 good
 “My child is not well-behaved both in school and at home.”
- b. 我孩子在学校在家都不乖
 wǒ hái-zi zài xué-xiào zài jiā dōu bù guāi
 1st child-son PREP study-school PREP home all NEG good
 “My child is not well-behaved both in school and at home.”

4.2 Reduplication

As a morphological process, reduplication refers to a phenomenon in which a morpheme is repeated to form a new word. Chinese verbs, adjectives, and classifiers can be reduplicated to serve different purposes. However, reduplication in Chinese has different patterns for various words and is applied frequently together with some cliticized particles.

4.2.1 Classifiers

A classifier can be repeated for emphasis functioning like a universal quantifier either as part of a nominal modifier such as those in (4.17) or as an adverb modifying the entire sentence (4.18).

- (4.17) a. 一条新闻 *yì-tiáo xīn-wén* “a piece of news”
 今天条条新闻都很重要
jīn-tiān tiáo-tiáo xīn-wén dōu hěn zhòng-yào
 now-day CL-CL new-hear all very NEG-good
 “Today every single piece of news is very bad.”
- b. 一座山 *yí-zuò shān* “a mountain”
 这地方座座山都很高
zhè -dì -fāng zuò-zuò shān dōu hěn gāo
 DEM-place-square CL-CL mountain all very tall
 “At this place all mountains are very high.”
- c. 一件行李 *yí-jiàn xíng-lǐ* “a piece of luggage”
 海关件件行李都要查
hǎi-guān jiàn-jiàn xíng-lǐ dōu yào chá
 sea-PASS CL CL walk-plum all want check
 “The Customs will check every single piece of luggage.”

Some classifiers can be repeated to precede a verb immediately functioning like an adverbial universal quantifier like those in (4.18).

- (4.18) a. 一天时间 *yì-tiān shíjiān* “a day’s time”
 我们现在天天吃杂粮
wǒ-mén xiàn-zài tiān-tiān chī zá-liáng
 1st-PL now -at CL-CL eat mix-grain
 “We now eat mixed grains every day.”

b. 一条鱼 *yì-tiáo yú* ‘a fish’

他养的鱼条条都很大

tā yǎng de yú tiáo tiáo dōu hěn dà

3rd raise REL fish CL CL all very big

‘Every single one of the fish that he keeps is very big.’

4.2.2 Informal kinship terms

Closest Chinese kinship terms tend to have a reduplicated term to address family members informally. The second syllable, the reduplicated one, can be pronounced with either a full tone or a neutral tone. Some of them are given in (4.19).

(4.19) Formal	Informal	
父亲 <i>fù-qīn</i>	爸爸 <i>bā-ba</i>	father
母亲 <i>mǔ-qīn</i>	妈妈 <i>mā-ma</i>	mother
家兄 <i>jiā-xiōng</i>	哥哥 <i>gē-ge</i>	my elder brother
家弟 <i>jiā-dì</i>	弟弟 <i>dì-dì</i>	my younger brother
家姐 <i>jiā-jie</i>	姐姐 <i>jiě-jie</i>	my elder sister
家妹 <i>jiā-mèi</i>	妹妹 <i>mèi-mei</i>	my younger sister
祖父 <i>zǔ-fù</i>	爷爷 <i>yé-yé</i>	paternal grandfather
祖母 <i>zǔ-mǔ</i>	奶奶 <i>nǎi-nai</i>	paternal grandmother
外祖母 <i>wài-zǔ-mǔ</i>	姥姥 <i>lǎo-lao</i>	maternal grandmother
外祖父 <i>wài-zǔ-fù</i>	姥爷 <i>lǎo-ye</i>	maternal grandfather
伯父 <i>bó-fù</i>	伯伯 <i>bó-bo</i>	father’s elder brother
伯母 <i>bó-mǔ</i>	大妈 <i>dà-mā</i>	wife of father’s elder brother
叔父 <i>shū-fù</i>	叔叔 <i>shū-shu</i>	father’s younger brother
叔母 <i>shū-mǔ</i>	婶婶 <i>shěn-shen</i>	wife of father’s younger brother
姑母 <i>gū-mǔ</i>	姑姑 <i>gū-gu</i>	father’s sister
舅父 <i>jiù-fù</i>	舅舅 <i>jiù-jiu</i>	mother’s brother
姨妈 <i>yí-mā</i>	阿姨 <i>ā-yi</i>	mother’s sister
公公 <i>gōng-gōng</i>	爸爸 <i>bā-ba</i>	husband’s father
婆婆 <i>pó-pó</i>	妈妈 <i>mā-ma</i>	husband’s mother
岳父 <i>yuè-fù</i>	爸爸 <i>bā-ba</i>	wife’s father
岳母 <i>yuè-mǔ</i>	妈妈 <i>mā-ma</i>	wife’s mother

Whereas 哥哥 *gē-ge*, 弟弟 *dì-dì*, 姐姐 *jiě-jie* and 妹妹 *mèi-mei* can also refer to siblings in general, the formal counterparts such as 家兄

jiā-xiōng, 家弟 *jiā-di*, 家姐 *jiā-jǐě*, and 家妹 *jiā-mèi* can only refer to one's own siblings.

4.2.3 Adjectives

Some monosyllabic adjectives can be reduplicated to make the original meaning either more vivid or more emphatic. When these adjectives are reduplicated, the relative marker *de* is obligatory, demonstrating such an operation is beyond the word level and phrasal in nature.

- (4.20) a. 红花 红红的花

 red-flower red-red REL flower
 “red flower” “flowers that are so red”
- b. 厚书 厚厚的书
 hòu-shū hòu-hou de shū
 thick-book thick-thick REL book
 “thick books” “books that are so thick”

The reduplication process of monosyllabic adjectives is much more productive than with their disyllabic counterparts. Some additional examples are *shòu* “thin” 瘦 → *shòu-shou*, *pàng* “fat” 胖 → *pàng-pang*, *shēn* “deep” 深 → *shēn-shen*, etc.

Some adjectives can be reduplicated to become adverbials of manner modifying verbs with an optional adverbial marker *de* 地.

- (4.21) a. 慢跑 慢慢地跑
 màn pǎo màn-man de pǎo
 slow run slow-slow AD run
 “slowly run” “run at a slow pace”
- b. 快走 快地走
 kuài zou kuài-kuai de zǒu
 quick walk quick-quick AD walk
 “quickly walk” “walk at a fast pace”

Some disyllabic adjectives can also be reduplicated either as a modifier of a noun (4.22) or as a modifier of a verb (4.23).

- (4.22) a. 舒服 舒舒服服的环境
 shū-fú shū -shu -fú -fu de huán-jìng
 stretch-serve stretch-stretch-serve-serve REL ring-territory
 “easy” “a comfortable environment”
- b. 普通 普普通通的人
 pǔ-tōng pǔ-pu -tōng -tong de ren
 general-through general-general-through-through REL human
 “ordinary” “an ordinary person”
- (4.23) a. 舒服 舒舒服服地坐下来
 shū-fú shū -shū -fú -fú de zuò -xià -lái
 stretch-serve stretch-stretch-serve-serve AD sit-down-come
 “easy” “sit down comfortably”
- b. 快乐 快快乐乐地走了
 kuài-lè kuài -kuài -lè -lè de zǒu le
 quick-joy quick-quick-joy-joy AD walk PFV
 “happy” “leave happily”

It is necessary to note that reduplication in Chinese is generally a highly idiosyncratic process that cannot be automatically applied to all verbs or adjectives. Additional examples of this type of adjectives include *jiǎn-dān* “simple” 简单 *jiǎn-jiǎn-dān-dān*, *píng-fán* “common” 平凡 → *píng-píng-fán-fán*, etc. Many common adjectives are, nevertheless, not allowed to be reduplicated, such as *měi-lì* “beautiful” 美丽 **měi-měi-lì-lì*, and *xìng-gǎn* “sexy” 性感 **xìng-xìng-gǎn-gǎn*. Furthermore, some descriptive adjectives can be reduplicated, not in the above AABB pattern, but in a different ABAB pattern. In the latter case they normally cannot be used adverbially.

(4.24)

- a. 笔直 笔直笔直的公路 *笔直笔直
 bǐ-zhí bǐ-zhí-bǐ-zhí de gōng-lù bǐ-bǐ-zhí-zhí
 pen-straight pen-straight-pen-straight-REL public road
 “straight” “a straight highway”
- b. 冰凉 冰凉冰凉的泉水 *冰冰凉凉
 bīng-liáng bīng-liáng-bīng-liáng de quán-shuǐ *bīng-bīng-liáng-liáng
 ice-cool ice -cool -ice -cool REL springwater
 “ice-cold” “ice-cold springwater”

Additional examples of this type include *qī-hēi* “dark” 漆黑 → *qī-hēi-qī-hēi*, and *dīng-dāng* “bell sound” 叮当 → *dīng-dāng-dīng-dāng* (this can be used adverbially).

4.2.4 Verbs

Li and Thompson (1981) observe that Chinese volitional verbs can be reduplicated to signal a delimitative aspect, *doing something a little bit*, such as the verbs indicating *to write* and *to see* in (4.25a). The delimitative aspect can actually be expressed in three ways, a reduplicated verb such as those in (4.25a), a reduplicated verb plus a clitic *kàn* that may in turn grow out of its verbal meaning “to look” originally such as the one in (4.25b), and a V-one-V form such as the string *xiǎng-yi-xiǎng* *think-one-think* “think a little” in (4.25c). The clitic *kàn* functions to emphasize the testing nature associated with the delimitative aspect (4.25b).

- (4.25) a. 我昨天就写写信, 看看书, 没做什么
 wǒ zuǒ-tiān jiù xiě -xie xìn, kàn-kan shū, méi zuò shénme
 1st yester-day only write-write letter, see-see book, NEG do any
 “Yesterday, I did not do much other than write some letters and read a little bit.”
- b. 我想写写看
 wǒ xiǎng xiě-xie kàn
 1st think write-write see
 “I want to write a bit to see.”
- c. 我想想看/ 想一想再说
 wǒ xiǎng-xiang- kàn/ xiǎng-yi-xiǎng zài shuō
 1st think-think-see/think-one-think then say
 “I (will) think a little bit before (I) decide.”

This kind of reduplication is fairly widely applied among monosyllabic verbs. Additional examples include *shuō* “speak” *shuō-shuo-kan/shuō-yi-shuō* “speak a little about,” and *zǒu* “walk” *zǒu-zou-kan/zǒu-yi-zǒu* “walk a little bit.” However, some non-volitional verbs, although they cannot be reduplicated in the VV pattern (4.26a), can be used in VV *kàn* and V-one-V patterns when implying a volition like a warning such as those in (4.26).

- (4.26) a. *你忘忘
 nǐ wàng-wàng
 2nd forget-forget
- b. 你忘忘看, 他肯定会骂你
 nǐ wàng -wàng kàn, tā kěn-dìng huì mà nǐ
 2nd forget-forget see 3rd sure-decide may scold 2nd
 “If you (dare to) forget (it even) a little, he definitely would scold you.”
- c. 我忘一忘, 他就骂我
 wǒ wàng-yi -wàng, tā jiù mà wǒ
 1st forget-one-forget, 3rd then scold 1st
 “I just forget a little, he immediately scolded me.”

Coordinate and restrictive-resultative verb compounds can be reduplicated with an ABAB pattern such as those in (4.27a and b) to mark the same delimitative aspect. However, they do not share the V-one-V or AABB pattern (4.27c and d).

- (4.27) a. 讨论 我们就讨论讨论这个问题
 tāo-lùn wǒ-mén jiù tāo-lùn -tāo -lùn zhè-ge wèn-tí
 talk-talk 2nd-PL then talk-talk-talk-talk DEM-CL ask-item
 “discuss” “We then (should) talk a little about this issue.”
- b. 研究 你研究研究看
 yán-jiū nǐ yán-jiū-yán-jiū kàn
 study-study 2nd study-study-study-study see
 “research” “You (should) research (on this) a little.”
- c. *讨论一讨论 *研究一研究
- d. *讨论讨论 *研究研究

Additional repeatable disyllabic verb compounds of this type include *dǎ-sǎo* “clean” 打扫: *dǎ-sǎo-dǎ-sǎo*, *liàn-xí* “practice” 练习: *liàn-xí-liàn-xí*, *jiě-jué* “resolve” 解决: *jiě-jué-jiě-jué*, and *jié-shěng* “save” 节省: *jié-shěng-jié-shěng*. The non-restrictive resultative compounds (4.28a), directional verb compounds (4.28b) and attainment resultative compounds (4.28c) do not allow reduplication to mark delimitative aspect in general (4.28), although

they can be repeated for emphasis or clarification as a separate and general phenomenon in the language (4.29).

- (4.28) a. 看见 *kàn-jiàn* look-see “see” *看见看见 *看看见见
 b. 出去 *chū-qù* exit-go “go out” *出去出去 *出出去去
 c. 看到 *kàn-dào* look-arrive “see” *看到看到 *看看到到
- (4.29) 你叫什么叫? 我看到 看到啦!
nǐ jiào shénme jiào? wǒ kàn-dào kàn -dào la
 2nd call what call? 1st look-arrive look-arrive PFV+RF
 “Don’t make so much noise! I sa-a-a-w it!”

For the verb object combination in which the initial verb is monosyllabic such as those in (4.30), only the initial verb-like syllable can be reduplicated to mark the delimitative aspect. Although the V-one-VO or VV *kàn*-O patterns are not permitted, it is possible to have the VVO *kàn* pattern (4.31).

- (4.30) a. 睡觉 *shuì jiào* sleep sleep “sleep” 睡睡觉 *睡一睡觉 *睡睡睡觉
 b. 跳舞 *tiào wǔ* dance dance “dance” 跳跳舞 *跳一跳舞 *跳跳看舞
- (4.31) 睡睡觉看 跳跳舞看 洗洗澡看
shuì-shuì jiào kàn tiào -tiao wǔ kàn xǐ -xi zǎo kàn
 sleep-sleep sleep see jump-jump dance see wash-wash bath see
 “(try to) sleep a little” “(try to) dance a little” “(try to) bathe a little”

Verbal compounds like those in (4.32) that take an object must be reduplicated in the ABAB pattern or ABAB-*kàn* pattern, frequently having either its syntactic object dropped (4.32b) or a pronoun only (4.32c).

- (4.32) a. 他常常抱怨他的朋友
tā cháng-cháng bào-yuàn tā de péngyǒu
 3rd often-often bear-grudge 3rd-REL friend-friend
 “He often complained about his friends.”
- b. 你让他抱怨抱怨看
nǐ ràng tā bào-yuàn -bào -yuàn kàn
 2nd let 3rd bear-grudge-bear-grudge see
 “You let him (try to) complain a little” (as a warning)

c. 你让他抱怨抱怨我看

nǐ ràng tā bào -yuàn -bào -yuàn wǒ kàn

2nd let 3rd bear-grudge-bear-grudge 1st see

“You let him (try to) complain a little about me.” (as a warning)

Other examples of this type include *xiǎo-xīn* small-heart 小心 “be careful” *xiǎo-xīn-xiǎo-xīn*, *guān-xīn* shut-heart 关心 “to be concerned with” *guān-xīn-guān-xīn*, and *xiào-láo* give-service 效劳 *xiào-láo-xiào-láo*.

Finally, *kàn* as a clitic occurs at the end of a verb phrase. Note that *shuì* 睡 and *jiào* 觉 sleep sleep “to sleep” are two Chinese words in (4.33). The verb *shuì* 睡 can be reduplicated in the manner, *shuì-shuì* and *shuì-shuì kàn* without its object, *jiào* 觉. Furthermore, the examples in (4.33) show that *kàn* is not a suffix as it cannot be placed between a verb and its object, **shuì-shuì kàn jiào*. It then follows that the *kàn* in *shuì-shuì jiào kàn* is a clitic attached to the end of a verb phrase indicating a delimitative aspect.

(4.33)	睡睡看	*睡睡看觉	睡睡觉看
	shuì-shuì kàn	shuì-shuì- kàn -jiào	shuì-shuì jiào kàn
	sleep-sleep see	sleep-sleep-see-sleep	sleep-sleep sleep
	“sleep a little”		“sleep a little”
	打打看	*打打看球	打打球看
	dǎ-da kàn	dǎ-da- kàn -qiú	dǎ-da qiú kàn
	“play a little”		“play a little”

4.3 Beyond morphology

Many of the processes described in this chapter appear to be phrasal processes operating between a word and a phrase. It appears that a fuller account of various uses relating to the infixal *-de/bu-* noted in the previous chapter also needs to hypothesize that some of their uses are consistent with a clitic hypothesis that operates in the phrasal, rather than the word, level. Please note that **pǎo-kuài* in (4.34a) is not a possible verbal compound in standard Chinese. Thus, the grammatical uses of *de* in (4.34b) cannot be treated as an infix. It is not a suffix either as **tā pǎo-de*¹ is not acceptable in standard Chinese in spite of the fact that *tā pǎo* “he runs” is acceptable. If this *de* is treated as a clitic functioning as some kind of complementizer, somewhat equivalent

to the infinitive marker *to* in English, to conjoin two predicates such as *pǎo* and *kuài* in (4.34) in marking potentiality at the same time, some logical explanation will then follow. In other words, the *pǎo* and *kuài* in (4.34b and e), as two predicates, represent two different verb phrases, thus allowing the clitic *de* to occur at the end of the first verb phrase. Once again, this account has gone beyond the limit of a word.

- (4.34) a. *跑快
pǎo kuài
run-quick
- b. 他跑得快
tā pǎo de kuài
3rd run get fast
“He can run fast”/“He runs fast.”
- c. 他跑得很快
tā pǎo de hěn kuài
3rd run-get very fast
“He runs very fast”/“He can run very fast.”
- d. 他跑不快
tā pǎo-bú-kuài
3rd run NEG-quick
“He is incapable of running fast”/“He is not running fast.”
- e. 他跑得不快
tā pǎo de bú kuài
3rd run get NEG fast
“He is not running fast.”

The clitic *de* in (4.34e) can conceivably derive from root–Root compounds like *xiǎo-dé* 晓得 bright-get “know” in which the verbal meaning *to get* may give rise to the potential (or possible) meaning. The historical pathway of the derivation of the clitic *de* may be from a verb meaning *to get* (see example (3.31) and part of a compound like *xiǎo-dé* of (3.32a)) → *to be possible* (as part of a root-root compound, see examples of *shě-dé* of (3.32d)) → *to be possible* (a clitic, example (4.34b and e)) → *to be possible* (infix, see examples such as *kàn-jàn* in (3.29)). Such a derivation history is captured by its contemporary diversified uses in standard Chinese discussed earlier.

A further challenge, noted in chapter 3, in defining a Chinese word comes from the compound verbs like *guān-xīn* 关心 “concern,” and *dāng-xīn* 当心 “watch out” in (4.35). As a compound verb, 当心 *dāng-xīn* can take a syntactic object like 他 *tā* “3rd.” But the fact that it can be separated by the interrogative marker like *shěnme* in (4.35b) raises questions about its status as a word.

- (4.35) a. 你很当心
 nǐ hěn dāng-xīn
 2nd very face-heart
 “You are very careful.”
- b. 你当心他
 nǐ dāng-xīn tā
 2nd face-heart 3rd
 “You watch out for him.”
- c. 你当什么心
 nǐ dāng shénme xīn
 2nd face what heart
 “You watch out for what?”

Feng (1995)² attempts to overcome the above difficulty by proposing an interface level that would allow phonological, syntactic, and morphological rules to interact. It is proposed that in the course of Chinese history there emerged a category, known as prosodic word,³ existing between morphology and syntax. Some of the disyllabic words in Chinese are morphological words true to its cross-linguistic nature, but some of them that can interact with syntactic rules are simply prosodic words. In other words, a prosodic word can be either a morphological word or a pseudo-word that is accessible to syntactic rules. In (4.36) a prosodic word like *dà-suàn* 大蒜 “garlic” is a morphological word by itself that conforms to the compounding strategy but is blocked from any syntactic operation. This property is evidenced by its intolerance to form a noun phrase with a separating relative marker *de* 的 together with a modifying adjective *dà*. Nevertheless, a different prosodic word like *dà-shù* “big tree” can form a noun phrase. In the *dà-shù* big-tree case, the two syllables are used as free morphemes with *dà* meaning exactly “big” and *shù* meaning exactly “tree.” This prosodic word is accessible to syntactic rules in generating a fuller noun phrase with a relative marker *de* in

(4.36a). In contrast, *dà* 大 in the morphological word *dà-suàn* “garlic” does not mean “big,” as a garlic can be truly very small indeed. So *dà-suàn* is a morphological word inaccessible to syntactic operation thus disallowing the sequence **dà de suàn*.

- (4.36) a. 大树 → 大的树 大蒜 → *大的蒜
 dà-shù dà de shù *dà-suàn dà de suàn*
 big-tree de REL tree big-garlic big REL garlic
 “big tree” “garlic”
- b. 这颗蒜很大。
 zhè kē suàn hěn dà
 DEM CL garlic very big
 “This garlic is very big.”

To further illustrate the need for a level between syntax and morphology, we may look at different uses of a transliteration *yōu-mòu* 幽默 seclude-quiet “humor” that can also be used as an adjective in a sentence like *tā yǒu yōumò gǎn* 他有幽默感 “He has a sense of humor.” However, it can be figuratively used as a transitive verb too, such as the one in (4.37a). Furthermore, the compound *yōu-mòu* can be broken up as some kind of prosodic word with the first syllable functioning like a verb such as the *yōu* 幽 in (4.37b) marked by a verbal suffix *-le*.

- (4.37) a. 你别幽默我
 nǐ bié yōumò wǒ
 2nd NEG humor 1st
 “Don’t humor me.”
- b. 幽了他一默
 yōu-le tā yí mò
 fun-PFV 3rd one fun
 “to humor him once”

This kind of metaphorical use of *yōu-mò* is possible only at the level to which syntactic rules are accessible. The hypothesis of a prosodic word allows this to happen.

In like manner, some of the polysemous uses of the potential marker *de* 得 can be understood as products of the interface between Chinese syntax and

morphology. As a result of morphological processes like word compounding, *-de* at first becomes used as a verb on the right such as the sequence in *xiǎo-dé* 晓得 bright-get “know” in which *-de* still has a sense of *get*. If we follow Packard’s (2000) hypothesis, this kind of word-forming process should be treated as some kind of lexicalization, i.e., in this process, Old-Chinese free morphemes like *xiǎo* and *dé* conjoin to form a single word with a Root–Root structure. The more abstract sense of possibility emerges in compound verbs like *shě-dé* abandon-possible 舍得 “not grudge to,” which can be understood as *possible to be abandoned*, as a further lexical development. They are not like *xiǎo-dé* which does not allow the infixal **xiǎo-bu-dé* but allows a sequence like *shě-bù-dé* “impossible not to grudge.” From this kind of context in which *dé* as the second Root of a prosodic word becomes a grammatical element, a complementizer, to connect two verbs, or to conjoin a verb and a clause, it changes into a verb-phrase clitic. This renovation ultimately leads to potential constructs like *pǎo-de kuài* run-Potential quick “possible to run fast,” linking *pǎo* and *kuài* that together are not a possible compound word but separate verbs. The similarity between verbal compounds like *kàn-jàn* “see” and *pǎo-de kuài* “can run fast,” i.e., comparing the two Root morphemes *kàn* and *jàn* to the verbs *pǎo* and *kuài* that are all free morphemes in Chinese, may lead to the materialization of Chinese infixes as a process of metaphorical extension. Additional examples like *kàn-jàn* include non-restrictive resultative verb compounds like *lā-kāi* 拉开 pull-open “open” and *dǎ-pò* hit-break “break,” directional resultative verb compounds like *huī-qù* 回去 return-go “return” and *zǒu-chū-qù* 走出去 walk-exit-go “walk out,” attainment resultative verb compounds like *chī-wán* 吃完 eat-finish “finish eating,” and *kàn-hǎo* 看好 look-complete “finish reading,” all of which allow the insertion of an infix.

4.4 Summary

In this chapter, various Chinese clitics and morphological processes operating between the word level and phrase level have been reviewed. In order to fully account for separable compound words like *guān-xīn* 关心 “to concern” and *dāng-xīn* 当心 “watch out,” an interface level, i.e., prosodic words, between word formation and phrase formation is proposed (Feng 1995). For example, *dāng-xīn* 当心 “watch out” in the sequences *nǐ hěn dāng-xīn* “you are very

careful” in (4.35a) and *nǐ dāng-xīn tā* “You watch out for him” in (4.35b) is a morphological word, but the sequence *nǐ dāng shénme xīn* “You watch out for what?” in (4.35b), according to Feng (1995), should be treated as a prosodic word accessible to syntactic operation. In short, the unclear boundaries of Chinese words mentioned in chapters 3 and 4 show that the study of Chinese word-forming strategies calls for a wider perspective. Relating to the notion of word, these chapters contend that in order to develop a fuller understanding of various Chinese forms, it is necessary to look at all the grammar, including phonology, morphology, syntax, and discourse factors, together.

FURTHER READING

- Chao, Y. R. 1968. *A grammar of spoken Chinese*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Li, Charles and Sandra Thompson. 1981. *Mandarin Chinese: a functional reference grammar*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Packard, Jerome L. 2000. *The morphology of Chinese: a linguistic and cognitive approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Packard, Jerome. 1997. *New approaches to Chinese word formation – morphology, phonology and the lexicon in modern and ancient Chinese*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

NOTES

1. *Tā pǎo dé* 他跑得 can be used as a grammatical sentence in some Chinese dialects, such as Sichuan dialect, meaning “he can run” or “he is good at running.”
2. For a complete introduction to the theory, please refer to the original as, given the objective of this project, it is impossible for me to introduce the theory with all its complicated arguments in this book.
3. In Feng’s 1995 proposal, prosodic words are identified in part by stress rules that are not covered here. A thorough discussion of these rules goes beyond the scope of this book.

5 Chinese writing

The earliest writing system in the world that we know appeared in Mesopotamia, present-day Iraq, around the mid-fourth millennium BCE, nearly two millennia earlier than the independently developed Chinese writing system. According to Schmandt-Besserat (1992), the immediate precursor of the earliest script in the Near East was a system of tokens made of small clay counters of many shapes that served for counting goods in prehistoric cultures.

A fully developed writing system is a communication system allowing people to share information without meeting face to face. Writing can also be thought of as a means of social control. Coulmas (1989) observes that the ancient great empires are unthinkable without a writing system because in order to rule a ruler must establish uniform standards and a set of laws in a land which depended on the development of a writing system. Chinese writing has been used for communication and served various political purposes in China, having played a most important role in the development of Chinese civilization in the last three millennia.

The earliest fully developed Chinese writing that we know of today is the inscriptions on turtle shells and oxen shoulder blades, commonly known as oracle-bone script that appeared in the mid-second millennium BCE during the Late Shang dynasty. However, there is no clear evidence that would show what kind of system immediately preceded the oracle-bone script. Furthermore, according to Boltz (1994), there is little convincing evidence showing contacts or influence between the much older writing system in the Near East and the writing system developed in China during the Neolithic age.

5.1 Chinese characters

Unlike a phonographic writing such as that of English where each letter of the alphabet encodes a phone, Chinese writing is a logographic system with

each grapheme (or character) simultaneously encoding sounds and meaning at the level of the syllable. As a logographic system, Chinese writing has the great advantage that it is not necessary for a person who knows how to decode the writing system to learn to pronounce the characters in order to read the messages written in them.

Chinese writing is, nevertheless, not just a system of visual signs, or ideographs, representing various concepts or ideas totally divorced from pronunciation. A literary speaker of any Chinese dialect can immediately pronounce a Chinese character in her/his own dialect. For example, the Chinese character, 水 “water” pronounced as *shuǐ* in standard Chinese, is pronounced as [fei] in the Northwestern Xi’an dialect, [suəi] in the Eastern Yangzhou dialect, [s ɿ] in the Wu dialect of Wenzhou, [ʃøɿ] in the Yue dialect of Guangzhou, and [tsui] in the Min dialect of Xiamen. The character 水, as a logographic form with a single-graph structure, does not represent any given phone within a word, but a syllable associated with a morpheme standing for “water.” In this sense, Chinese writing as a system of morpheme–syllable representation is systematically phoneticized, i.e., the characters are readable.

Such a phonetic characteristic can be further demonstrated by the Chinese character 马 *mǎ* which is a morpheme meaning “horse.” It can, at the same time, be used as a phonetic graph representing the syllable *ma* in forming characters with composite graphs denoting various meanings. For example, when combined with a graph signifying a woman 女, the character 妈 *mā* “mother” is said to have a composite structure as it is composed of two graphs, 女 and 马. Similarly, when the phonetic graph is combined with a significant graph of two mouths 口口, the character 骂 refers to the verbal morpheme *mà* “to curse;” finally when the same phonetic graph is combined with a graph signifying a stone 石, the character 码 *mǎ* indicates a unit of length “yard.” The character 马 for “horse” is clearly used as a phonetic graph relating to the sounds of the syllable *ma* without any implication of its original meaning.

In modern Chinese, graphemes, or characters, are known as *hàn-zì* 汉字, literally “Han-character” bearing the name of the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE). It was during the Han dynasty that Chinese writing was to a large extent standardized at a time when writing brushes, ink, ink stone and paper, *wénfáng sībǎo* 文房四宝 “four treasures in a study,” became the standard tools in Chinese writing. The word in Chinese for writing is a disyllabic one, *wén-zì* 文字, with *wén* 文 originally standing for a graph that cannot be broken

down into smaller units and *zì* 字 representing composite graphs. Therefore, traditionally it is said *dú tǐ wéi wén hé tǐ wéi zì*, 独体为文合体为字 “a single-part is a graph, composite-parts make a character (or grapheme)”.

5.2 The history of Chinese script

One of the Chinese legends attributes the invention of writing to a legendary figure Cang Ji, 仓颉, the royal scribe at the court of the powerful Yellow Emperor. Through observing the patterns of the tracks left behind by the feet of birds, Cang Ji invented Chinese writing. Upon this incredible invention heaven rained millet, and ghosts wailed at night . . . (Huainanzi 淮南子 8/4b, quoted in Boltz 1994).

After the oracle-bone script, 甲骨文 *jiǎgǔwén*, of the Shang dynasty, there came bronze script, 金文 *jīnwén*, that was used to create inscriptions engraved on bronze vessels found from the Late Shang dynasty. Bronze inscriptions found in the Zhou dynasty (1100–403 BCE), in some cases with hundreds of characters per piece, constitute the model for later brush-writing techniques (Norman 1988). As compared to oracle-bone script, bronze script is a less angular and linearized style of writing. After the Warring States period (403–221 BCE) when various states had different writing styles, the Qin dynasty (221–207 BCE) politically unified the Chinese states and adopted *zhuànshū* “seal script,” the writing script of the Qin state during the Warring States period, as the national standard of the newly founded empire. Obviously, even during the Qin Empire, more than one writing script existed. First of all, *Zhuànshū* is divided into two types: *dàzhuàn* “great seal” and *xiǎozhuàn* “small seal,” with the former bearing a stronger resemblance to the earlier bronze script and the latter resembling more the clerical script, *lìshū* 隶书, which is mainly a writing style created by lower-ranking officials of the Qin dynasty. According to Xu Shen 许慎, an important scholar of the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE) who put together a remarkable dictionary, *Shuōwén jiězì* 说文解字 “On graphs and composite graphs,” clerical script is a simplified variety of the seal script developed initially as some type of shorthand for *zhuànshū* “seal script.” He observed that *guānyù zhíwù fán, chū yǒu lìshū, yǐ qū yuē yì* 官狱职务繁, 初有隶书, 以趋约易 “the tasks in government bureaucracy became so abundant and complicated that clerical script began to be used for the purpose of facilitating faster writing” (from the preface to *Shuōwén jiězì*).

Table 5.1 *Early development of Chinese script.*¹

	Oracle-bone script	Bronze script	Seal script	Clerical script
“light”				
“bright”				
“ten thousand”				
“water”				

Clerical script later developed into *kǎishū* “standard script” 楷书 such as 光 *guāng* “light,” 明 *míng* “bright,” 万 (萬) *wàn* “ten thousands,” and 水 *shuǐ* “water” in Table 5.1, after the Han-dynasty invention of paper that can absorb ink so much faster than the previously silk-based paper, or the surface of wood and bamboo plates for writing. Since then, the standard script was used as the official Chinese orthography for about two millennia, until 1965, when a simplified standard script was officially adopted in the People’s Republic of China.

During Xu Shen’s time (100 CE), the standard clerical script replaced seal script as the official orthography and was in use for more than one hundred years. Consequently, most scholars in Han time found it difficult to read older texts written in seal script. Xu Shen, as well as many of his contemporaries, were thus highly motivated to study the structure of the Chinese characters (in seal script) in order to correctly decipher the texts written before the Han dynasty. As a result, Han scholars like Xu categorized six principles (or methods), *liùshū* 六书, underlying the graphic structure of the Chinese characters. They are: *xiàngxíng* 象形 “pictographic” (3.9%),² *zhǐshì* 指示 “ideographic” (1.3%), *huìyì* 会义 “compound indicative/semantic–semantic compounds” (12.3%), *xíngshēng* 形声 “semantic–phonetic compounds” (81.2%), *jiǎjiè* 假借 “borrowing” (1.2%) and *zhuǎnzhù* 转注 “explanatory” (0.07%).

Although early writings may be mostly pictographic in nature, pictographic *xiàngxíng* graphemes, making up only 4% of the Chinese characters in the Han dynasty, had already become a less conspicuous category two millennia ago. Pictographs like 𠄎 in oracle-bone script for “the moon” had already evolved into 月 *yuè* in clerical script in which the resemblance to the object in the real world was no longer as clear as before. Ideographic

graphemes, with 1.3% of the total in *Shuōwén jǐzì*, were also waning in usage. Unlike pictographs that resembled the shapes of the objects in the real world, ideographs represent abstract ideas that cannot be symbolized in terms of size or shape. For example, characters like 上, or 下, which in oracle-bone script represent abstract directional ideas like “up” and “down,” had developed into 上 *shàng* and 下 *xià* in clerical script, retaining some directional orientation.

However, about 94% of the characters in clerical script were formed by composite graphs including semantic–semantic and semantic–phonetic compounds. Semantic–semantic compounds, *huìyì*, that made up 12.3% of the characters in the *Shuōwén jǐzì* refer to composite graphs like 信 *xìn* “trust” which is a combination of the semantics of two component graphs, 人 “human” and 言 “words” respectively. It is said that the driving force to adopt the character 信 to represent the idea of *trust* is because of the totality of combined semantics of the two graphs; 人+言 *rén+yán* “human+words” are 可信 *kě-xìn* “trustworthy.” Thus, the character 信 actually suggests “human words are trustworthy.” Another good example can be found in the composite graphs 从 *cóng* “to follow” which is composed by two human beings 人+人, one following another. Still another example is the character 明 *míng* “bright” that combines two graphs representing the sun and the moon.

Despite this the majority of Chinese characters, 81.2% to be exact, are formed through the method of semantic–phonetic compounding, *xíngshēng*. It was noted in Section 5.1 above that a graph like 马, originally representing “horse,” is used as a phonetic graph symbolizing the sounds of a syllable *ma* in 妈 denoting “mother” with a woman semantic graph 女, 码 meaning “yard (length)” with a semantic graph signifying stone 石, and 骂 meaning “to curse” with a semantic graph of two mouths 口口. Sometimes, more than one principle can be at work in forming a Chinese character. For example, the verb, *qǔ*, “for a man to marry a woman,” is written as 娶.³ It is both a *xíngshēng* semantic–phonetic compound character and a *huìyì* semantic–semantic compound character. On the one hand, 取 functions as a phonetic graph for the syllable *qǔ* combining the semantic graph 女, representing women, to form a character meaning “(man) to marry.” On the other hand, the phonetic graph 取, which also means “to obtain,” can be analyzed as a semantic graph indicating that a wedding to a man can be thought to “obtain a woman,” thus 取 “to obtain” 女 “female.”

The placement of the semantic components for Chinese characters can be on the left side, on the right side, on the top, or on the outside of a character. Sproat (2000) observes from the Taiwan *big-5* character-set that among 2,588 characters the placement of the semantic components identified in the Qing dynasty dictionary *Kāngxī Zidǎn* 1,745 (67%) are on the left side of a character such as 女 “female” in 妈 “mother,” 313 (12%) on the top such as 山 “mountains” in 岁 “age,” 313 (12%) at the bottom such as 日 “sun” as 暮 “evening,” 166 (6%) on the right such as 鸟 “bird” in 鸡 “chicken,” and 51 (2%) on the outside such as 口 “mouth” in 围 “surround.”

Moreover, not all phonetic graphs of the semantic–phonetic compounds in standard Chinese orthography still maintain a clear phonetic correspondence for many historical reasons, including sound changes and simplification. Sproat (2000) observes that the phonological information provided by the phonetic component is sometimes well suited, sometimes partial and sometimes totally irrelevant. He notes: *yā* 鸭 “duck” in which the phonetic component 甲 *jiǎ* “cuirass” is only partially correct in marking the final *-iā*; *cāi* 猜 “guess” in which the phonetic component 青 *qīng* “green” is totally incorrect in marking the final *-āi*.

- (5.1) *yā* 鸭 “duck” the phonetic component 甲 is pronounced as *jiǎ*
cāi 猜 “guess” the phonetic component 青 is pronounced as *qīng*

According to a Chinese dictionary published in Singapore (Nangyang Siang Pau, 1984), after its adoption of simplified characters as the standard orthography, 64% of the phonetic components in semantic–phonetic compounds were a closer match to the pronunciation of the whole word than before, whereas 36% were a worse match.

Some modern Chinese scholars (Chen 1999: 133) believe that there were really only three major strategies in forming characters at the early stages of Chinese writing: pictographic, ideographic, and compound indicative (semantic–semantic). *Xíngshēng* “semantic–phonetic” compound characters, that represent 32% of the characters in oracle-bone script, are relatively few. This fact is because of the limitations of the human imagination in mapping complicated concepts onto graphs in any iconic fashion. Accompanying the abstraction process of the writing script and the need for a more and more expansive vocabulary, as revealed by the Middle Chinese

dictionary *Guǎngyùn*, semantic–phonetic compounds provided a very productive method to create new words on the basis of a current “stock” and grew to make up 90% of the Chinese characters. In modern Chinese, semantic–phonetic compounds constitute 74% of the most commonly used 2,000 characters (Chen 1999: 135).

Jiǎjiè 假借 “loan words” that made up 1.2% of characters in the Han dynasty refer to the graphemes that were originally designed to represent words that are etymologically unrelated to their current usage. However, because of phonetic similarity such totally unrelated characters were borrowed to represent totally different words. For example, the character 𥝌 was originally used in oracle-bone script to denote “wheat,” but was later borrowed to represent the idea of a motional verb 来 *lái* “to come.” *Zhuǎnzhù* 转注 “explanatory” that represented only 0.07% of Han-dynasty characters refers to a category that is not very well understood by modern scholars. Examples of this type include characters like 老 *lǎo* and 考 *kǎo*, both of which can mean “old.” Various accounts have been proposed by various scholars to analyze this set of characters (Qiu 2001: 100–2). However, lack of conclusive evidence leaves the exact nature of this category enigmatic.

5.3 The strokes of Chinese writing

The character for “cloud” was written as 𠄎 in oracle-bone script and 𠄎 in bronze script, both of which have a curvy line in the bottom somewhat resembling a piece of floating cloud. However, after Chinese script was standardized after the Han dynasty, various Chinese graphemes can be analyzed in terms of strokes, 笔划 *bǐhuà*, i.e., lines, dots, and hooks that are drawn on a piece of paper with a writing instrument, forming characters to codify words. For example, in standard script, the earlier undulant and angular lines were replaced by straighter and more regular lines that are more compatible with brushwork techniques. In so doing different kinds of strokes can be easily identified. For example the character representing *cloud* in standard script is 雲 *yún* with twelve strokes (simplified standard script 云 with four strokes). In another example, the more pictographic character 𠄎 with drops of water on both sides of a straight line representing the word for *water* in oracle-bone script (Table 5.1) was replaced by a character of three strokes, 水 *shuǐ*, 𠄎 in clerical script and the later standard script.

Generally speaking, six basic strokes are recognized in modern Chinese writing, including 一, which is called *héng* 横 meaning “horizontal line,” 丨 *shù* 竖 “vertical line,” 丿 *piě* 撇 “left-falling line,” ㇇ *nà* 捺 “right-falling line,” 点 *diǎn* “dot,” and 提 *tí* “rising line.” The basic strokes have variant forms that can be shorter in length or oriented toward a slightly different direction as compared to those given above. Furthermore, a number of the six basic strokes can jointly form an extended stroke such as the bending, first stroke 冫 known as *héngzhé* 横折 “horizontal stroke with a turn,” in the character 书 *shū* “book” (note the dot at the upper right corner) which is composed of two extended strokes that turn vertically at the end. Although the extended stroke may be analyzed into two lines, a horizontal line and a vertical line separately, they are regularly treated as one stroke as it should be drawn by a writing instrument in a continuous fashion. Similarly, the first stroke ㇇ for the character 水 “water” is called 横撇 *héngpiě* “a horizontal stroke with a left falling line,” the second stroke 丨 is called 竖钩 *shùgōu* “a vertical stroke with a hook,” and the third stroke ㇇ is called 撇捺 *piě nà* “a left and right falling stroke.”

A character is supposed to be written stroke by stroke. Chinese children are taught to write different strokes in each character by strictly following stroke order rules. There are four of these rules. The first rule is to write in the order from top to bottom. In other words, for the character 云 “cloud,” the first stroke is a short horizontal line 一; the second stroke is another, but longer, horizontal line, 二; the third is a left-falling line that turns horizontally in the bottom 厶; and the last is a dot 丶. The second rule is to write a character in the order from left to right. Therefore, for the character 化 “to change,” the first stroke is 丨 at the top of the graph signifying human on the left; the second stroke is the 丨 of the same graph on the left; the third stroke is 丨 on the right; the last is 丨 known as 竖弯钩 *shùwāngōu*. The third rule is to write the horizontal stroke before the vertical. So for the character 十 “ten,” the horizontal stroke 一 should be written before the vertical one 丨. The fourth rule is to write the outside first, then the inside, and the last stroke in the bottom. In so doing, the relevant ones of the previous three rules must also be followed. Thus, for the character 田 *tián* “field,” the first stroke is the outside vertical line 丨 on the left (according to the first rule); the second stroke is a horizontal stroke with a vertical turn 冫 in forming 阝; the third and fourth strokes are the cross 十 inside (remember the third rule); and the last stroke is

the horizontal line in the bottom that seals off the character 田 (Fei, Huang, and Zhang 1995)

There are many practical reasons for students to learn these stroke-order rules. For example, writing is considered to be a form of art in Chinese culture. These rules may help students develop some necessary skills in placing various strokes proportionally to produce aesthetically acceptable characters. Moreover, one could not use many Chinese dictionaries effectively without knowing the order of strokes, as most dictionary index systems draw on stroke-order rules as a useful way to help users find the relevant entries of a given character. Even after the romanized spelling system was adopted, most Chinese dictionaries still provide an index relying on the number of strokes because there are many people who may not be familiar with either the romanized system adopted in a given dictionary or the pronunciation, or pronunciations, of a given character. For example, in the most widely used *xiàndài hànyǔ cídiǎn* 现代汉语词典 in China, there is a two-step index system that is divided into two sections, *bùshǒu* 部首 “initial radical” and 检字表 *jiǎnzìbiǎo* “radicals guide,” both of which depend heavily on the number of strokes. In this dictionary, that contains over 56,000 words, about 200 initial radicals are recognized. A user needs to count the number of strokes in the initial radical of a character, or the first character if the word has more than one character, to find the section that has all the characters with the same initial radical. Then, the user needs to count the number of strokes in the remainder of the character to find the page number where all the relevant entries beginning with the character will be listed.

For example, in looking up the word *míngbái* 明白 “to understand” in which the first character of the word is 明 *míng* “bright,” one needs to, first of all, count the number of strokes in the initial radical of 明. In accordance with the stroke-order rule requiring left to right sequence, the initial radical in the case is 日 which contains four strokes, 丨, 冂, 一 and 一. Then, the user should refer to the section, under *bùshǒu* 部首 “initial radical,” that catalogues all initial radicals with four strokes to look for the radical 日 and a page number. With this number one can find from 检字表 *jiǎnzìbiǎo* “radicals guide” the section where all of the characters with 日 as the initial radical are catalogued. These characters, once again, are listed in sections beginning with those that have the fewest strokes to those that have the most. In our case, the remaining radical is 月 that happens to have four strokes as well, 丨, 冂, 一, and 一. So under

the four-stroke section, one should be able to find the page number after the character 明. On the page given, or in the subsequent pages if the character is used extensively, one can find the target entry, 明白 “to understand.”

5.4 Simplified standard script

The number of characters has grown exponentially over time. Norman (1988) reported that in the Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE) there were about 3,300 characters. In Xu Shen’s *Shuōwén jiězì* (100 CE) the number of characters had grown to 9,535. In the Middle Chinese dictionary *Guǎngyùn* (1011 CE) the number of characters had nearly tripled to reach 26,149. In the dictionary *Kāngxī zìdiǎn* of the Qing dynasty (1716 CE), 47,043 characters were collected. Zhou (1988) reported that among the 56,000 words in modern Chinese, the most commonly used 2,400 characters make up 99% of all characters used in Chinese publications. In light of the large number of characters, it is a daunting task for anyone to learn such a large number of characters irrespective of their cultural background, or ethnic origin. The simplification of the standard script in the last century mostly involves the reduction of the number of strokes for the commonly used characters and the number of multiple-graphic forms for a commonly used word (Chen 1999). For example, before the Chinese government officially simplified the standard script in 1956, there were two acceptable graphic forms, or 异体字 *yìtǐzì*, to represent the same word *to shut*, 闕 and 關 *guān*. However, currently, after the simplification of the standard script, there is only one acceptable form 关 that has six strokes. Also, many simpler popular graphic forms with a fewer number of strokes were adopted to stand for the graphemes that have many more strokes. For example, 万 *wàn* “ten thousand” with three strokes is now the standard form for the older standard form 萬 that had twelve strokes.

Although there has been a strong conservative attitude against the simplification of Chinese characters, since they were standardized before the Tang dynasty (618 BCE), a large number of popular graphic forms, or 俗体字 *sútǐzì*, became widely used among the common people (Norman 1988) throughout history for the sake of ease in writing. Furthermore, these graphic forms in popular usage became the basis for the language planners in China to simplify the standard script for the mass literacy movements in the first half of the twentieth century. The first list of simplified characters which contained over

three hundred characters was officially recognized as the new standard characters in 1935 by the government of the Republic of China in Nanjing.⁴ More systematic simplification occurred during the 1950s, and by 1965 about one third of the 7,000 most commonly used characters were officially simplified and constituted a new standard script, 简体字 *jiǎntǐzì*.⁵ According to the list of simplified characters (1986 edition) published by the Chinese State Council (People's Congress and Jiaoyubu 2001), 350 single characters, 132 characters that could be used as radicals and 14 initial radicals, and 1,753 characters affected by the radicals were officially adopted as part of the simplified standard script. The 350 single characters are those like 开 *kāi* “to open” replacing the unsimplified 開, 乱 *luàn* “chaos” replacing the older 亂. The 132 simplified characters that can be used as radicals include 云 *yún* “cloud” that shapes a part in 坛 *tán* “altar,” and 万 *wàn* “ten thousand” that can form a part of 迈 *mài* “to stride.” The 14 initial radicals refer to component parts such as 讠 that is simplified from 言 *yán* “words” and appear as the initial radical in 说 *shuō* “to speak,” 谈 *tán* “to discuss,” 记 *jì* “to record,” and 讨 *tǎo* “to discuss.” These all have something to do with *words*. The largest group, including 1,753 characters, bring up all that are affected by the simplification of the radicals in the last two categories such as 坛, 迈, 说. In a survey of 100 newspaper editorials conducted by Zhou (1992: 168), the average number of strokes was reduced from 9.15 to 7.67, making Chinese script have a fewer number of strokes to learn.

However, the simplified standard script may have its limitations too. In contrast to the limited number of syllables in Chinese, there are over 56,000 characters. According to Chen (1999: 138), among the most commonly used 3,000 characters, only 31.5% of the tonal syllables are represented by one character. That is to say, with over 68.5% of the tonal syllables represented by two or more homophonous characters, homophony is a widespread phenomenon in the language. For example, *jī*, depending on the context, can mean 击 “to hit,” 级 “class,” 机 “machine,” 吉 “fortunate,” etc. It is, therefore, not easy for a learner to easily predict the pronunciation of a character purely on the basis of its written form. However, among 4,800 morphemes commonly used in modern Chinese, 87.5% of them have a one-to-one correspondence between characters and morphemes, 10.2% have a one-to-two correspondence, and 1.7% of them have a one-to-three correspondence. In other words, Chinese characters correspond more closely to morphemes, making this script

a very useful means of disambiguating the homophonous morphemes. One side effect of reducing the number of strokes in the process of simplifying Chinese characters is the increase in the number of look-alikes in the writing. For example, some simplified characters like 儿 *ér* “child” and 几 *jǐ* “several” differ from each other only by one stroke and, thus, can be easily confused by a learner. However, their unsimplified forms 兒 “child” and 幾 “several” with so many more strokes are much easier for a beginning learner to notice the differences and less likely to be confused. Another pair of similar nature can be the simplified 风 *fēng* “wind” and 凤 *fèng* “phoenix” as their unsimplified forms were 風 “wind” and 鳳 “phoenix.” Therefore, the success in reducing the number of strokes for the sake of ease in writing was accomplished at a cost, threatening to increase, on the other hand, the difficulty in reading.

Unsuccessful efforts have also been made in modern time to replace Chinese writing with a purely phonographic system like that of English. *Hànyǔ pīnyīn* as a romanized Chinese spelling system was originally created to serve as an intermediate writing system toward complete romanization of Chinese writing. Mao Zedong, the most powerful Chairman of the Chinese Communist Party for nearly forty years, once told an American journalist, Edgar Snow, that he believed that for the sake of overcoming illiteracy, Chinese characters must give way to romanized Chinese writing so as to equip the masses of the people with a really efficient and rich vocabulary in a new social culture (DeFrancis, 1984). However, forty years after its official adoption, most Chinese people at the present time still cannot read, or write, in the official romanized spelling system. It functions essentially as a useful spelling system to assist dialect speakers and foreign students to learn to speak *pǔtōnghuà* and annotate Chinese names in roman letters. Although, accompanying the surge of computer literacy among the Chinese speakers, the utility of *hànyǔ pīnyīn* in inputting Chinese texts with English-based keyboards may conceivably encourage its fluency among the Chinese people, it remains doubtful if it would ever replace the character-based Chinese writing that has been in use for more than three millennia. Furthermore, with the literacy rate⁶ in the People’s Republic of China already reaching 86%, the Chinese government is no longer actively promoting romanized writing. As a matter of fact, according to the Language Bill adopted by the Chinese National People’s Congress in 2000, simplified characters will be the official orthography for the nation.

Throughout Chinese history, writing has been a unifying force as speakers of different, mutually unintelligible Chinese languages can easily communicate in a common written language. Its script uniquely transcends time and space. However, since the success of the simplification movements in the People's Republic of China and Singapore, many people from Taiwan have been resisting the adoption of the new orthography because of either political affiliation or personal inclination. According to Su (1994), although the two scripts, simplified and unsimplified, with nearly two thirds of the 4,010 characters published (1980) by the Taiwan authorities as *standard forms of characters in running script* identical with, or nearly the same as, the script used in the People's Republic of China after simplification, share a high degree of commonality, they still can be confusing to native speakers who read the other script for the first time. Currently this debate has even become a very sensitive political issue among the overseas Chinese communities depending on their emotional affiliation. Saturday Chinese language schools are divided into those that teach simplified standard script and those that teach the unsimplified standard script to the children. Without any political resolution jointly taken by both sides of the Taiwan Straits, the situation of having two standard scripts in Chinese will continue for a long time in the foreseeable future.

FURTHER READING

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NOTES

1. I am grateful to Mr. Yin Chuang for providing the characters in the table for me.
2. Percent of characters in *shuōwén jiězì* (Norman 1988: 267).
3. The word for a woman to marry is different and is represented by a different character 嫁 *jià*, in which a woman graph 女 combines with the phonetic graph 家 representing the syllable *ia*.

4. It was later abolished due to resistance from conservative forces within the government.
5. The standard script that has lasted for nearly two millennia and is still used in Hong Kong and Taiwan is commonly known as complex characters 繁体字 *fántǐzì*.
6. The threshold of literacy is generally set at 2,000 characters (Chen 1999).

6 Chinese language and culture

The Chinese language, which is a communication system used by the Chinese people on a daily basis to accomplish various goals in life, unavoidably carries many features reflecting some of the commonly held social beliefs in their culture. Culture can be roughly defined as socially learned patterns of behavior and interpretive practices, in which language plays a most important part (Duranti 1997: 49). In fact, the ways in which many Chinese words, idioms, popular sayings, metaphors, and neologisms (newly coined words, see section 6.1 for a detailed discussion) are widely used among the Chinese correspond to the cultural beliefs and experiences that have shaped China as a country over the last three millennia. This chapter deals with various Chinese expressions in relation to these cultural underpinnings with the goal to situate some common Chinese usages such as idiomatic expressions to the social contexts of the Chinese-speaking community.

Furthermore, the Chinese people, who have been in contact with many foreign cultures and languages throughout history, have also embraced and integrated into their own culture many foreign concepts and ideas. The second half of this chapter shows how language contacts, interactions between various cultural groups speaking different languages in Chinese history, have led to an extensive amount of borrowed terms in the modern Chinese lexicon.

Finally, the structures of neologisms including many Chinese words of European origin and the morpheme–syllable Chinese writing system are examined together to show the importance of meaning in coining neologisms in Chinese. For example, the modern Chinese usage of 文化 *wén-huà* representing *culture* was adopted from Japanese as it was first extensively used in Japan as a neologized lexical item representing the European word *culture* in the nineteenth century. However, the two Chinese characters 文 and 化 in this word, standing for two bound roots *wén* and *huà* in modern Chinese, existed in oracle-bone and bronze scripts as two different signs with some pictographic traits: 𠄎, for 文, is a sign with a human body marked by

some crossed lines on the chest standing for “tattoo,” and 化, for 化, is a sign with two human bodies with their heads toward the sky and ground separately signifying change (Karlgren 1957). Over time, *wén* is transformed into a polysemous morpheme meaning graph, artistic, or literary talent in Chinese. Similarly, *huà* adapted to hold various meanings including *to change* and *to educate* in Chinese. In the nineteenth century the Japanese borrowed these two Chinese graphemes to create a new word to translate the European word *culture* into Japanese. Later, this neologized Japanese word was reintroduced into Chinese, or returned to China, to translate the same European word.

6.1 Cultural beliefs and Chinese expressions

The Chinese language is full of idioms that are commonly used in texts of different genres as an erudite style of writing. Of similar nature are also sayings, or proverbs, that are sentence-long. A good mastery of these idiomatic expressions and skillful use of them in writing essays, novels, news reports, editorials, etc. are much appreciated in a Chinese-speaking community. For example, an axiom such as *more haste less speed* in English corresponds to the four-syllable Chinese phrase, 欲速不达 *yù-sù-bù-dá* want-speed-not-reach. Many disyllabic words and four-syllable idiomatic expressions in the Chinese language are coined from concepts and ideas embraced by influential philosophical traditions and religious practice and are widely used in modern Chinese. In the following the focus will be on Chinese expressions that are related to cultural practices and beliefs largely shared by Chinese communities.

6.1.1 Philosophical beliefs and Chinese expressions

There is perhaps no philosopher who has impacted Chinese life in the last two millennia more profoundly than Confucius, 孔丘 *kǒng qiū*. Confucius was born in 551 BCE in the current-day Shandong province of China. His philosophy is known as *rúshù* 儒术 “methods of the Confucians” or as *rújiā* 儒家 “school of Confucianism.” One of the well-known Confucian doctrines is perhaps “the family is the basis for regulating society.” *The ancients who wished to brighten the illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom first kept their*

own states in order. Wishing to keep their states in order, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their own persons (Book of Rite, 大学 *dàxué*).¹ Although it is difficult to prove that there is a necessary and direct link between what Confucius said and the emergence of various Chinese sayings, expressions relating to the concept of family permeate the Chinese language. The sayings and four-syllable idioms in (6.1a) are just a small sample of phrases beginning with *jiā* “family.”

- (6.1) a. 家和万事兴
jiā hé wàn shì xīng
 family harmony myriad thing rise
 “A harmonious family will prosper in everything it does.”
- b. 家财万贯
jiā cái wàn guàn
 family estate myriad units
 “a family with multiple fortunes”
- c. 家给人足
jiā jǐ rén zú
 family supply people sufficient
 “All in the family live in plenty.”
- d. 家常便饭
jiā cháng biàn fǎn
 family often convenient meal
 “homely food” or “common occurrence”

Of course, nothing on earth can be worse than 家道中落 *jiā-dào-zhōng-luò* family-way-middle-decline “suffer decline in family fortune,” or worse still 家破人亡 *jiā-pò-rén-wáng* family-break-people-die “the whole family is ruined with some dead.” It might be of some interest to note that in the four-syllable idioms in modern Chinese each syllable behaves more like a free morpheme in Old Chinese. Thus, at times, some lexical items should be pronounced in their archaic form. For example, in (6.1c) the character 给 is not pronounced according to the more common modern Chinese pronunciation *gěi* but in its older pronunciation *jǐ*.

Social propriety 礼 *lǐ* is taken by Confucians to be the greatest principle in living, embodying the five idealized human relationships between lord and

subjects 君臣 *jūn-chén*, father and son 父子 *fù-zǐ*, friends 朋友 *péngyǒu*, husband and wife 夫妻 *fū-qī*, and senior and junior 长幼 *zhǎng-yòu*. Interestingly, three of them, father and son, husband and wife, and senior and junior, are all related to family members. The Confucian conviction, the love that a son should show toward his parent which is called *xiào* 孝 “filial piety,” has given rise to many words and idioms like 孝顺 *xiào-shùn* love-obey “filial obedience,” 孝子 *xiào-zǐ* love-son “a filial son,” and 孝子贤孙 *xiào-zǐ-xián-sūn* love-son-worthy-grandson “worthy progeny.” The love *cí* 慈 that a father or a senior should have toward his sons or juniors has also generated many words and idioms in Chinese such as 慈爱 *cí-ài* love-love “affection,” 慈祥 *cí-xiáng* love-auspicious “kind,” 慈父 *cí-fù* love-father “loving father,” 慈母 *cí-mǔ* love-mother “loving mother,” 慈悲为怀 *cí-bēi-wéi-huái* love-sad-make-heart “have a merciful heart,” and 慈善事业 *cí-shàn-shì-yè* love-good-matter-trade “charities.”

In *The Analects*, a collection of classical teachings from Confucius, it was recorded that once there was a disciple of Confucius who was anxious about having no brother of his own. Confucius said to him, *Let the superior man never fail reverentially to order his own conduct, and let him be respectful to others and observant of propriety – then all within the four seas will be his brothers. What has the superior man to do with being distressed because he has no brothers?*² Consistent with Confucian teaching, even in modern times, all men of letters in the kingdom, 四海之内 *sì-hǎi-zhī-nèi* “all within the four seas,” habitually address each other as brothers, attaching 兄 *xiōng* “elder brother” to the name of a fellow scholar, regardless of his actual age. This practice, known as 称兄道弟 *chēng-xiōng-dào-dì* address-older-brother-say-younger brother “call each other brothers” in modern time, leads to terms of address like 孙兄 Sun-elder brother, 陈兄 Chen-elder brother, 李兄 Li-elder brother, etc. or simply 老兄 *lǎo-xiōng* old-brother “older brother.” As a matter of fact, on hearing *lǎo-xiōng* so frequently in the conversations of northerners, Cantonese speakers actually have come up with a nickname for their northern countrymen, calling them [lau song nou] “older-brother people” which mimics the standard pronunciation of *lǎo-xiōng* with the addition of the slangy Cantonese morpheme [nou] fellow.

At the same time, in Chinese, one frequently refers to oneself, regardless of one’s actual age, as 弟 *dì* “younger brother” uniformly, 小弟 *xiǎo-dì* small-younger brother “the naive me,” or even 愚弟 *yú-dì* silly-younger brother “silly me.” In informal settings, very good friends, or gang members, who are not

related in blood call themselves, for the sake of solidarity, 哥儿们 *gē-er-mén* elder brother-Diminutive-PL “brothers” for men and 姐儿们 *jiě-er-mén* elder sister-Diminutive-PL “sisters” for women. Or simply attach *gē-er*, or *jiě-er*, as some kind of suffix to the name of an addressee depending on gender. The social practice of extending the use of family terms of address to strangers is rationalized by sayings like the one in (6.2).

- (6.2) 在家靠父母, 在外靠朋友
 zài jiā kào fù -mǔ, zài wài kào péngyǒu
 at home rely father -mother, at outside rely friends
 “At home one relies on parents, outside one relies on friends.”

From this perspective, calling each other brothers can be seen as a useful device either in solidifying friendship between non-relatives through the creation of a family atmosphere or in establishing a friendly relationship with an acquaintance. It is, therefore, also quite common for young people, or fellow workers, to address each other colloquially as 大哥 (哥) *dà-gē* “big brother,” 大姐 (姐) *dà-jiě* “big sister,” 小妹 (妹) *xiǎo-mèi* “little sister,” or 小弟 (弟) *xiǎo-dì* “little brother.” However, although attaching a term of address to a name as in 王大哥 *Wáng-dà-gē*, 张哥 *Zhāng-gē*, 陆大姐 *Lù-dà-jiě*, 程姐 *Chéng-jiě* is quite a common and respectable way to address a fellow worker with whom one may want to cultivate a more personal relationship, the terms of address for the junior 弟 *dì* and 妹 *mèi* are not used as commonly as the senior terms, for the reason that the use of the junior terms may be taken to be demanding respect from a junior or insinuating a sense of intimacy that may be unwanted.

Many disyllabic words formed with 同 *tóng* “common” show relationships among people, such as 同族 *~zú* ~-race “of the same race,” 同宗 *~zōng* ~-clan “of the common clan,” 同种 *~zhǒng* ~-breed “of the common race,” 同姓 *~xìng* ~-name “of the common last name,” 同名 *~míng* ~-name “of the same given name,” 同乡 *~xiāng* ~-village “of the same hometown,” 同年 *~nián* ~-age “of the same age,” 同龄 *~líng* ~-age “of the same age,” 同辈 *~bèi* ~-generation “of the same generation,” 同等 *~děng* ~-class “of the same rank,” 同学 *~xué* ~-study “fellow student,” 同班 *~ban* ~-class “classmate,” 同屋 *~wū* ~-house “housemate,” 同伴 *~bàn* ~-company “companion,” 同事 *~shì* ~-work “colleagues,” 同胞 *~bāo* ~-sibling “of the same

parents,” 同路 *~lù ~-road* “fellow traveler,” and 同命 *~mìng ~-life* “of the same fate.”

For friends, in accordance with the Confucian tradition, 忠 *zhōng* “devotion” and 信 *xìn* “trust” are the two guiding principles. Therefore, many words and idioms have emerged relating to these two ideas. There are 忠告 *zhōng-gào* devote-tell “sincere advice,” 忠诚老实 *zhōng-chéng-lǎo-shí* devote-sincere-old-true “be true and faithful,” 赤胆忠心 *chì-dǎn-zhōng-xīn* red-courage-devote-heart “utter devotion,” 忠心耿耿 *zhōng-xīn-gěng-geng* devote-heart-bright-bright “most faithful and true,” etc. In addition, there are also many words and idioms relating to *trust* such as 信念 *xìn-niàn* true-idea “belief,” 信件 *xìn-jàn* true-piece “letters,” 信封 *xìn-fēng* true-seal “envelope,” 信箱 *xìn-xiāng* true-box “mailbox,” 信贷 *xìn-dài* true-credit “credit,” 信用卡 *xìn-yòng-kǎ* true-use-card “credit card,” and 信守诺言 *xìn-shǒu-nuò-yán* true-guard-promise-word “keep one’s promise.”

Other than Confucianism, Buddhism, 佛教 *fó-jìào*, is the religion that has affected Chinese life, as well as the language, most significantly since it spread to China from India about two millennia ago. The most dominant Chinese variety of Buddhism is called Chan 禅 *chán* “deep meditation.” Many words in Chinese of Sanskrit origin were coined as necessary to spread Buddhist ideas leading to such transliterations like 南无阿弥陀佛 *nánmóāmítuófó* from *Namo Amitabha* for Buddha Amitabh, 弥勒佛 *mílèfó* from *Maitreya* for Maitreya Buddha, 摩罗 *mōluó* from *Mara* for demons, and 阎罗 *yánluó* from *Yama-rajā* for god of hell (Shi 2000: 37).

Some important tenets of Buddhism also became integral parts of the Chinese language. For example, Buddhists believe that the myriad things on earth are predestined to live and die. Furthermore, one can be free from all human suffering, which arises only from the worldly desires of the humans, through practicing the Eightfold Path. Therefore, there are four-syllable idioms like 因果报应 *yīn-guǒ-bào-yìng* cause-effect-report-reply “judgment of preordained fate (karma),” 功德无量 *gōng-dé-wú-liàng* merit-virtue-no-limit “boundless beneficence,” 现身说法 *xiàn-shēng-shuō-fǎ* show-body-say-doctrine “expound by using one’s own experience as example,” 人生如梦 *rén-shēng-rú-mèng* people-live-like-dream “life is like a dream,” 劫后余生 *jié-hòu-yú-shēng* plunder-after-left-live “life survived a holocaust,” 佛口婆心 *fó-kǒu-pó-xīn* Buddha-mouth-granny-heart “be patient,” 衣钵相传 *yī-bō-xiāng-chuán* clothes-bowl-mutual-pass “hand down one’s legacy to favorable

disciple,” and 僧多粥少 *sēng-duō-zhōu-shǎo* monk-many-porridge-little “not enough to go around” (Chang 1995: 71). The examples in (6.3) are some sentence-long sayings relating to Buddhist ideas.

- (6.3) a. 无事不登三宝殿
 wú shì bù dēng sān bǎo diàn
 no business NEG mount three treasure hall
 “One will never come without the need for help.”
- b. 不看僧面看佛面
 bú kàn sēng miàn kàn fó miàn
 NEG see monk face see Buddha face
 “Even if one does not respect a person, one would still respect the face of that person’s elders.”
- c. 跑了和尚跑不了庙
 pǎo le héshàng pǎo bù liǎo miào
 run PFV monk run NEG finish temple
 “No matter how one tries, one can never escape from it.”
- e. 放下屠刀立地成佛
 fàng-xià tú -dāo lì dì chéng fó
 lay-down slaughter-knife stand ground become Buddha
 “Even a very bad person can change into a good person.”

Ideas from the Daoist school of thought, 道家 *dàojiā* and Daoism, 道教 *dào-jiao* a Chinese religion, have found their way into popular Chinese language. Daoism worships the art of *wú wéi* 无为, which is to let nature take its course, and to practice self-cultivation. Related words and idioms that were inspired by Daoism include 玄妙 *xuán-miào* dark-subtle “mysterious,” 道士 *dào-shì* Dao-scholar “a Daoist,” 修行 *xiū-xíng* cultivate-practice “practice perfection,” 顺其自然 *shùn-qí-zì-rán* obey-POS-self-so “let nature take its course,” 修心练性 *xiū-xīn-liàn-xìng* cultivate-heart-practice-nature “cultivate oneself with heart and soul,” 神通广大 *shén-tōng-guǎng-dà* spirit-communicate-broad-big “infinitely resourceful,” 神机妙算 *shén-jī-miào-suàn* spirit-opportunity-subtle-calculate “wonderful foresight in predicting the course of events,” 邪门歪道 *xié-mén-wāi-dào* slant-door-twist-way “dishonest practices,” 旁门左道 *páng-mén-zuǒ-dào* side-door-left-way “heterodox,” and 灵丹妙药 *líng-dān-miào-yào* divine-powder-charm-medicine

“miraculous cure.” Other sentence-long sayings relating to Daoist conceptions are like those in (6.4).

- (6.4) a. 道高一尺魔高一丈
 dào gāo yì chǐ mó gāo yí zhàng
 Dao high one foot demon high one unit (3.33 meters)
 “There is always a better way to defeat the enemy.”
- b. 一人得道鸡犬升天
 yì rén dé dào jī quǎn shēng tiān
 one person have way chicken dog rise sky
 “Once a man gains influence, anybody relating to him will be promoted.”
 (Chang 1995: 67)

6.1.2 *Metaphors the Chinese live by*

Cognitive linguists believe that human knowledge arises out of the interaction between the experiencing organism and the experienced environment. Conventional metaphors that are used in everyday language typically involve a process of conceptual mapping from more concrete domains to more abstract domains. Johnson (1989: 109) observes that “[w]hat we can experience, what it can mean to us, how we understand that experience, and how we reason about it are all integrally tied up with our bodily being.” Metaphors, in accord with this line of thinking, are frequently motivated by, and grounded in, our bodily experience interacting with the world (Lakoff 1994). Members of a speech community, or within a culture, may live by many metaphors that can be ultimately related to their fundamental bodily experience. The cognitive mechanisms that give rise to conceptual projection are metaphors involving conceptual mappings across different experiential domains and metonymy involving conceptual mappings across different subdomains within the same experiential domain, or superordinate. Chinese and English share a great deal of metaphorical domains that may indicate common human experience, in spite of many differences (Yu 1998).

For metaphor, the target domain is to be understood in terms of the source domain. For example, in English the experiential domain of *love* is commonly mapped to a source domain of bodily experience and is understood as a

downward movement as evidenced by the English idiom *fall in love*. However, the metaphor for *love* in Chinese, although it is also mapped to a source domain of bodily experience, is to be understood in the opposite direction. For example, the Chinese translation for *falling in love* is 爱上 ài-shàng love-up.

In Chinese anger is fire: 发火 fā-huǒ release-fire “become angry,” 心头火起 xīn-tóu-huǒ-qǐ heart-head-fire-up “flare up in anger,” 心头怒火 xīn-tóu-nù-huǒ heart-head-anger-fire “fury,” 大动肝火 dà-dòng-gān-huǒ big-act-liver-fire “fall into a rage,” 怒火中烧 nù-huǒ-zhōng-shāo anger-fire-middle-burn “burning rage,” 火冒三丈 huǒ-mào-sān-zhàng fire-shoot-three-unit “thrown into a rage,” etc.

Eating out in Chinese can be metaphorically mapped onto the source domain of space, although it can be taken to be either an upward movement or downward movement as in 上馆子 shàng guǎn-zi up house-DIM, “eat in a restaurant” or 下馆子 xià guǎn-zi down house-DIM, “eat in a restaurant.”

Alternatively, happiness is only taken to be an upward movement in Chinese: 高兴 gāo-xìng high-spirit “happy,” 情绪高涨 qíng-xù-gāo-yáng feel-mood-high-raise “in high spirits,” 兴高采烈 xìng-gāo-cǎi-liè spirit-high-color-intense “jubilant,” 情绪高涨 qíng-xù-gāo-zhàng fee-mood-high-swell “spirits running high,” etc.

For metonymy, a part is taken to be whole. For example, in English a subdomain, *human bodies*, can be taken to represent the superordinate, *people* as in the sentence *We need a couple of strong bodies for our team* (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). A similar conceptual mapping occurs in Chinese as the sentence can be translated into (6.5), in which the size of a body is taken to represent *people*.

- (6.5) 我们队需要两个大个子
wǒ-men duì xū -yào liǎng-ge dà gè -zi
1st-PL team should-want two-CL big size-DIM
“We need a couple of strong bodies for our team.”

Other examples of metonymy include 头昏脑胀 tóu-hūn-nǎo-zhàng head-dusk-brain-swell “dizzy and befuddled,” 头昏眼花 tǒu-hūn-yǎn-huā head-dusk-eye-flower “be dizzy and have blurred vision,” 头脑发热 tóu-nǎo-fā-rè head-brain-release-heat “lose sight of reality dizzily,” 没头没脑 méi-tóu-méi-nǎo no-head-no-brain “without reason,” 昏头昏脑 hūn-tóu-hūn-nǎo

dusk-head-dusk-brain “muddleheaded,” and 茫无头绪 *máng-wú-tóu-xù* vast-no-head-thread “clueless.” In all these examples, the physiological effects on the head (part) accompanying the state of confusion (whole) stand for the state of being confused.

Frequently, metaphor and metonymy work together in forming expressions through conceptual mappings across different experiential domains. Yu (2004) notes that 眉目 *méi-mù* brow-eye, which may constitute the most conspicuous parts of a person’s face, is extended to refer to one’s look, or appearance, as a part to the whole metonymy, as exemplified in the idiom 眉目清秀 *méi-mù-qīng-xiù* brow-eye-clear-pretty “a pretty face.” Still another example comes from Chinese language internet sites where pretty girls are commonly referred to as 美眉 *měi-méi* beautiful-brow. Although several phonetic and morphological factors like 妹妹 *mèi-mei* “younger sister” and 美 *měi* “beautiful” are all realized with the phonetic string (except tones) resembling *méi* 眉 “brow,” it is still essentially a part-to-whole metonymic change. Such a use can be metaphorically extended to cover the meaning of “taking shape” in a different experiential domain as is shown by the example in (6.6).

- (6.6) 这计划终于有点眉目了
 zhè jì -huà zhōngyú yǒu diǎn méi -mù le
 DEM plan-plan finally have some brow-eye CRS
 “This project finally is shaping up.”

Chinese metaphors are numerous and cannot be exhaustively listed here within an introductory section. The following are some metaphors that involve internal organs and can be understood only from the traditional Chinese worldview that divides the myriad of things in the world into the rather complicated, interrelated five elements, i.e., 金 *jīn* “metal,” 木 *mù* “wood,” 水 *shuǐ* “water,” 火 *huǒ* “fire,” and 土 *tǔ* “earth” given in Table 6.1, that is taken partially from Yu (1998: 74).

肝 *gān* “liver” and 胆 *dǎn* “gall” fall into the category of *wood* that conceptualizes anger and, therefore, forms many idioms together such as 肝胆相照 *gān-dǎn-xiāng-zhào* liver-gall-mutual-shine “utter devotion to each other (among friends),” 肝胆过人 *gān-dǎn-guò-rén* liver-gall-pass-people “unsurpassed in valor,” and 肝胆俱裂 *gān-dǎn-jù-liè* liver-gall-all-break “heart-broken.”

心 *xīn* “heart,” 舌 *shé* “tongue,” and 肠 *cháng* “small intestine,” on the other hand, fall into the category of *fire* that conceptualizes happiness.

Table 6.1 *The five categories of metaphor, listed under the five elements, adapted from Yu 1998: 74, Table 3.*

Element	wood	fire	earth	metal	water ³
Season	spring	summer	late summer	autumn	winter
Climate	windy	hot	wet	dry	cold
Zang 藏	liver	heart	spleen	lung	kidney
Fu 腹	gall	small intestine	stomach	large intestine	bladder
Sense	eyes	tongue	lips	nose	ears
Emotion	anger	happiness	anxiety	grief	fright

Thus, fire plays a role in many Chinese idioms symbolizing happiness like 热心肠 *rè-xīn-cháng* hot-heart-intestine “warm-hearted,” 心肠软弱 *xīn-cháng-ruǎn-ruò* heart-intestine-soft-weak “a soft heart,” 心直口快 *xīn-zhí-kǒu-kuài* heart-straight-mouth-quick “frank and outspoken,” 心口如一 *xīn-kǒu-rú-yī* heart-mouth-like-one “to say what one thinks,” 心花怒放 *xīn-huā-nù-fàng* heart-flower-furious-open “burst with joy.”

Moreover, 脾 *pí* “spleen” and 胃 *wèi* “stomach” are in the category of 土 *tǔ* “earth” that evokes anxiety as well. Therefore, there are phrases and idioms like 发脾气 *fā-pí-qì* lose-spleen-gas “to lose one’s temper,” and 脾胃相投 *pí-wèi-xiāng-tóu* spleen-stomach-mutual-throw “share similar likes and dislikes.”

肺 *fèi* “lung” is part of 金 *jīn* that conceptualizes grief. Thus, idioms which contain 肺 *fèi* relate to grief such as 肺腑之言 *fèi-fǔ-zhī-yán* lung-organ-REL-word “words from the depth of one’s heart,” and 感人肺腑 *gǎn-rén-fèi-fǔ* move-people-lung-organ “move people to sadness.”

Two different internal organs can also be combined to form idioms like 没心没肺 *méi-xīn-méi-fèi* no-heart-no-lung “heartless” in which *xīn* “heart” belongs to the *fire* category (happiness), and *fèi* belongs to the *metal* category (grief). Putting these concepts together, this idiom then implies that a person who does not know when to grieve, or when to rejoice, is a heartless person. The difference is that whereas English only uses the metaphor of heart, Chinese uses heart and lung together in this metaphor. A synonymous idiom 铁石心肠 *tiě-shí-xīn-cháng* iron-stone-heart-intestine is also cross-categorical as 心 *xīn* and 肠 *cháng* belong to the category of fire conceptualizing happiness, but 铁 *tiě* and 石 *shí*, although not as internal organs, fall into the 金 *jīn* element conceptualizing grief.

6.1.3 Politeness

In their efforts to build a cross-cultural theoretical framework many scholars (Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987) have found that central to politeness, a prevalent concept underlying human interaction is the highly abstract idea of *face*. According to Brown and Levinson (1987) *face* is a self-image that every member of a speech community wants to claim for oneself. Every speaker can be seen as entering into any conversation with two seemingly conflicting “face wants,” i.e., a negative face want, which is the desire to act unimpeded by other people, and a positive face want, which is the desire to be liked by others. Since this assertion, some scholars (Mao 1994, Yu 2003) have argued that face-work pertains to culture-specific traditions. Whereas in a highly individualistic western society, the negative “face want” dominates, in a Chinese society where members are supposed to subordinate themselves to a group, or a society at large, focus is on the positive “face want” in order to achieve homogeneity in accord with Confucianism (Yu 2003). In Chinese society a speaker must enter a conversation displaying only the positive face want, in order to be respected by members of a community (Mao 1994). Within Chinese culture, it is not uncommon for one to tailor one’s behavior against one’s own will, thus willingly, or unwillingly, sacrificing freedom for the sake of public recognition, reputation, or prestige.

It has been observed (Yu 2003: 1684) that in the *Oxford English Dictionary* this particular usage of the English word *face* was initially adopted by the English-speaking community in China to mean “one’s credit, good name, reputation.” This term was expanded to refer to the ways in which Chinese people generally behave to avoid incurring shame or disgrace, leading to English idiomatic expressions like *to save face*, *to lose face*, and *to put on a good face*. These phrases translated back into Chinese become: 要面子 *yào miàn-zi* want-face-DIM, 没面子 *méi-miàn-zi* no-face-DIM, and 装样子 *zhuāng-yàng-zi* install-appear-DIM respectively. In Chinese, closely relating to positive face are the two important ingredients 面子 *miàn-zi* “face” and 脸 *liǎn* “face,”⁴ with the former emphasizing public recognition of a person’s reputation or prestige, and the latter emphasizing respect from a community for a person’s ability to meet generally accepted social and moral standards (Mao 1994). When a person is truly respected, only *miàn-zi* can be used, such as in the examples in (6.7).

- (6.7) a. 他很有面子/*脸
 tā hěn yǒu miàn-zi *liǎn
 3rd very have face-DIM
 “He is much respected.”
- b. 他的面子(*脸)大
 tā de miàn-zi dà *liǎn
 3rd REL face big
 “He is much respected.”

One’s social reputation or prestige, i.e., *miàn-zi*, is taken to be something that can be earned from the members of a given community. Thus one can either give face, or *show respect*, 给面子 *gěi miàn-zi*, or not give face, 不给面子 *bù gěi miàn-zi* to another person. But 没面子 *méi-miàn-zi* “do not have respect” may imply a person may not be respected by a community because society has been misguided or simply has yet to recognize that person’s outstanding achievement. However, 没脸 *méi liǎn* “do not have respect” implies that at a given moment a person is in some way morally deficient. 没面子 *méi-miàn-zi* “do not have respect” is generally considered as much less severe than 没脸 *méi liǎn* “do not have respect,” as is indicated by the sentences in (6.8).

- (6.8) a. 没脸见人
 méi liǎn jiàn rén
 NEG face see people
 “(One) cannot face the people.”
- b. 你这个不要脸的东西
 nǐ zhè ge bù yào liǎn de dōng-xi
 2nd DEM CL NEG want face REL east-west
 “You are such a shameless thing!”

Mao (1994) observes that once *liǎn* is lost, one’s *miàn-zi* in a given community cannot be maintained. 丢脸 *diū-liǎn* lose-face “to lose face” is just like 丢人 *diū-rén* lose-people “to lose people.” Therefore, most people desire to enjoy both “faces” as is implied in the idiom 有脸有面 *yǒu-liǎn-yǒu-miàn* have-face-have-face “a respected person with high moral standards.” In spite of different emphases, the two faces, *liǎn* and *miàn-zi*, appear to be interrelated too, with *liǎn* being a necessary ingredient of *miàn-zi* in the sense that one can never maintain one’s *miàn-zi*, if one loses *liǎn*. It appears that respect from

a society for one's moral integrity is also taken to be something "earnable" from a social group. For instance, there are idiomatic expressions in which *liǎn* is used with verbs like *to give* or *to reward* signifying the attainability of social respect such as the examples in (6.9).

- (6.9) a. 给脸不要脸
 gěi liǎn bù yào liǎn
 give face NEG want face
 "(Someone) wants to be nice to a person, but this person rejects it."
 b. 赏脸 *赏面子
 shǎng liǎn
 reward face
 "Be nice."

In terms of politeness, Chinese also has a more elaborate system of terms of address than English. It was noted in Section 6.1.1 above that in *The Analects* Confucius emphasized respect for each other in a properly regulated society such as *Let the superior man never fail reverentially to order his own conduct, and let him be respectful to others and observant of propriety*. Admittedly, the practice of 称兄道弟 *chēng-xiōng-dào-dì* address-older-brother-say-younger brother "to call each other brothers" that shows respect among the intellectuals is far from being a grammatical system of honorific morphemes signifying the social relationships between speakers and hearers. In addition to this example, there are many more customary practices central to Chinese culture that are imperative in marking politeness.

Within the Confucian world, knowing one's own position and behaving accordingly are taken to be fundamentals of a regulated society as is revealed by the following quote from Confucius: *There is government when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son* (*The Analects*: Yan Yuan). Corresponding to this teaching, the use of an appropriate Chinese term of address is of utter importance in showing cultural sensitivity and politeness. In western culture, father and son occasionally may greet each other casually by their first names. But in a Chinese speech community, only the parents, or seniors, may greet their children, or juniors, by their names, but not vice versa, not even in the most casual

moment. Children must greet parents, teachers or elders properly as 爸爸 *bà-ba* “father,” 妈妈 *mā-ma* “mother,” 老师 *lǎo-shī* old-teach “teacher,” etc. In a factory, apprentices must address their masters as 师傅 *shī-fù* teach-teach, meaning “master.”

In polite conversations the speaker can refer to a listener’s immediate family with expressions such as those in (6.10).

- (6.10) 尊夫人 *zūn-fū-rén* respect-that-person “your wife,”
 嫂夫人 *sǎo-fū-rén* elder-brother’s wife-that-person “your wife,”
 令尊 *lìng-zūn* your-respect “your father,”
 令堂 *lìng-táng* your-hall “your mother,”
 令兄 *lìng-xiōng* your-elder brother “your elder brother,”
 令嫂 *lìng-sǎo* your-elder sister-in-law “your elder sister-in-law,”
 令姐 *lìng-jiě* your-sister “your elder sister,”
 令弟 *lìng-dì* your-younger brother “your younger brother,”
 令妹 *lìng-mèi* your-younger sister “your younger sister,”
 令郎 *lìng-láng* your-young person “your son,”
 令爱 *lìng-ài* your-love “your daughter,”
 令公子 *lìng-gōng-zǐ* your-male-child “your son.”

The corresponding less formal polite terms of address are 您父亲 *nín-fù-qīn* your-father-relate “your father,” 您母亲 *nín-mǔ-qīn* your-mother-relate “your mother,” 您孩子 *nín-hái-zi* your-child-child “your children,” 您儿子 *nín-ér-zi* your-son-son “your son,” 您家人 *nín-jīā-rén* your-family-people “your family,” etc. Though a little stilted to be used among friends, the most polite ways to refer to one’s own family members in a more formal social context are those in (6.11).

- (6.11) 家父 *jiā-fù* family-father “my father,”
 家母 *jiā-mǔ* family-mother “mother,”
 家兄 *jiā-xiōng* family-elder brother “my elder brother,”
 内人 *nèi-rén* inside-person “my wife,”
 家夫 *jiā-fū* family-husband “my husband,”
 家弟 *jiā-dì* family-younger brother “my brother,”
 家妹 *jiā-mèi* family-younger sister “my younger sister,”
 小儿 *xiǎo-ér* small-son “my son,”
 小女 *xiǎo-nǚ* small-girl “my daughter,” etc.

Colloquially, similar terms of address are 我父亲 *wǒ-fù-qīn* my-father-relate “my father,” 我母亲 *wǒ-mǔ-qīn* my-mother-relate “my mother,” 我爸 *wǒ-bā* my-father “my dad,” 我妈 *wǒ-mā* my-mother “my mom,” 我太太 *wǒ-tàitai* my-supreme-supreme “my wife,” 我妻子 *wǒ-qī-zi* my-wife-son “my wife,” 我老婆 *wǒ-lǎo-pó* my-old-old woman “my wife,” 我先生 *wǒ-xiān-shēng* my-early-born “my husband,” 我丈夫 *wǒ-zhēng-fū* my-male elder-that “my husband,” 我老公 *wǒ-lǎo-gōng* my-old-old man “my husband,” 我孩子 *wǒ-hái-zi* my-child-son “my children,” etc. In socialist China, particularly during the cultural revolution (1960s–70s), where the working class was officially considered to be the leading class, 师傅 *shī-fù* “master,” became the most popular term of address among the masses of the people. This phenomenon gave rise to terms like 小师傅 *xiǎo-shī-fù* small-teach-teach “young master,” 老师傅 *lǎo-shī-fù* old-teach-teach “old master,” and 女师傅 *nǚ-shī-fù* female-teach-teach “woman master,” in addition to the more neutral polite term of address 同志 *tóngzhì* common-aspiration “comrade.”

After the 1980s, as China started to open up to the outside world, the globalization drive reintroduced some of the general polite terms of address among the Chinese people such as 先生 *xiān-shēng* early-born “Gentleman/Mr.,” 女士 *nǚ-shì* female-scholar “Lady/Ms.,” 小姐 *xiǎo-jie* small-sister “Miss.” These terms of address were already in practice in other Chinese speech communities like those in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Although *xiǎo-jie*, a term originally implying a most likely well-mannered, young lady from a well-to-do household, became a popular term of address for young ladies in China, its frequent use as euphemism for bar-girls and prostitutes has recently undercut its popularity among many young women who find it offensive.

In addition, Chinese does not have any grammatical means, such as the subjunctive mood in English, to mark polite speech. Instead, it relies heavily on a polite verb 请 *qǐng* that in direct speech is commonly placed at the beginning of a sentence such as those in (6.12).

- (6.12) a. 听我说 (imperative sentence)
 tīng wǒ shuō
 listen 1st say
 “Listen to me!”

- b. 你听我说 (declarative sentence, less direct than a)
 nǐ tīng wǒ shuō
 2nd listen 1st say
 “You listen to me”
- c. 您听我说 (declarative sentence, more polite)
 nín tīng wǒ shuō
 2nd listen 1st say
 “You listen to me”
- d. 请您听我说 (declarative sentence, more polite than c)
 qǐng nín tīng wǒ shuō
 please 2nd listen 1st say
 “Please listen to me!”
- e. 请您听我说, 好吗? (question, most polite allowing a no answer)
 qǐng nín tīng wǒ shuō, hǎo ma?
 please 2nd listen 1st say, good Question
 “Would you please listen to me?”

Some formulaic expressions customarily used as conventionalized requests are given in (6.13). The kind of conventionalized request used in polite ritual does not apply to strangers who have no family ties, or are not even acquaintances, and does not obligate a hearer to any specific task. However, these statements are ritually not allowed to be refused (Wu 2000). Deferential Chinese expressions such as the one in (6.13a) are used to underscore the humility or respect that a speaker has for the hearer. This statement is particularly appropriate in bidding farewell such as at the end of a letter, to one's senior relatives or friendly senior citizens. The expression in (6.13b) is appropriate for a young person, such as a junior clerk, to say after s/he has been introduced, for the first time, to a person who is either his/her senior or someone who enjoys a higher social position. The sentence in (6.13c) is felicitous to say after presenting a paper, or one's personal view, in front of a learned audience.

These requests can be further subdivided into two types (Wu 2000). One type of conventionalized request in ritual use devotes the action directly to the benefit of the hearer, such as the one in (6.13a) showing that the speaker respects and cares about the well-being of the hearer. Another type

of conventionalized request in ritual (6.13b and c) devotes the action to the benefit of the speaker. Although these expressions potentially could seriously threaten the *face* of a hearer, as the hearer is openly asked to take on a serious task in “taking care of the speaker” or “advising the speaker” without being given an opportunity even to indicate her/his willingness in so doing, culturally speaking, this may not be taken to be much of an imposition. What allows a Chinese speaker to impose on a hearer is probably the socially accepted Confucian ideology which requires all the people who are seniors to love and care about the well-being of their juniors. The positive *face* of a senior person is actually complimented by the conventionalized request indicating the speaker’s attitude in treating the hearer as a morally superior person who would take care of all of his juniors in accord with the socially accepted doctrine. The hearer, therefore, is more likely to respond positively to such irrefutable conventionalized requests that do not necessarily commit her/him to any specific favoritism.

- (6.13) a. 请多多保重
 qǐng duō-duō bǎo-zhòng
 please much-much save-weigh
 “Please take good care (of yourself).”
- b. 请多多关照
 qǐng duō-duō guānzhào
 please much-much concern-care
 “Please take good care (of me).”
- c. 请多多指教
 qǐng duō-duō zhǐ-jiào
 please much-much point-teach
 “Please advise profusely.”

Such conventionalized requests, on the other hand, place the speaker in a position that is subordinate to the hearer. Even in a situation in which the hearer is not the speaker’s senior, the speaker does not run any risk of being impolite by showing his humility and modesty which is very much a cultural requirement in Chinese society. To counter such a conventional request, a modest hearer can always reply (您)太客气了 (*nín*) *tài kè-qì le* 2nd too guest-air CRS “You are being too modest.”

Modesty is also generally a necessary ingredient in social interactions. Even an expert is not supposed to boast about his skills, or special talent, in front of friends, or even worse, in front of strangers. When inviting friends to a dinner at home, you are not supposed to tell them how good a cook you are, even though you may be a great cook. Therefore, a ten-course meal specially prepared for some houseguests is still conventionally called by the host as 便饭 *biàn-fàn* “a convenient meal,” as in (6.14a). When the guest leaves after enjoying a ten-course meal, it is polite to see the guests off at the outside gate and say 怠慢 *dài-màn* “We have been a very poor host” repeatedly. It is rude to close the door before the guest is out of sight.

- (6.14) a. 吃便饭
 chī biàn-fàn
 eat convenient-cooked rice
 “enjoy a dinner”
- b. 怠慢怠慢
 dài-màn dài-màn
 negligent-slow negligent-slow
 “(I have been) a poor host.”

6.2 Language contacts and borrowings

China has been in contact with speakers of different language groups from the very beginning of its civilization. As a consequence of such collective experience, the language is full of terms that are of foreign origin. Rice in the field is called 稻 *dào* “paddy” in Chinese. However, in the south it is also known as 谷 *gǔ* and 禾 *hé*. These terms may have their origin from a language relating to Zhuang nearly seven millennia ago (Zou and You 1986). Furthermore, the Chinese word for milk is 乳 *rǔ*. However, the word most commonly used in modern Chinese for milk is 奶 *nǎi* that was a loan from Dong-Tai languages in southern China during ancient times (Shi 2000). 葡萄 *pútáo* “grapes,” 橄榄 *gǎnlǎn* “olive,” 苹果 *píngguǒ* “apple,” and 菠菜 *bōcài* “spinach” were all Middle-Chinese borrowings from the languages spoken in southwestern Asia (Shi 2000).

Over the last two millennia, the area around Yellow River was frequently ruled by various Altaic-speaking people, many of whom are still living in

northern China. As a result of such a history, the Chinese- and Altaic-speaking cultures have become closely interwoven. For example, a commonly used modern Chinese word 站 *zhàn* “station/bus stop” is a word borrowed from the Mongolian *jam* used to mean a post where couriers can change horses or rest (Gao and Liu 1958). **Ghua* (Shi 2000) meaning “people” in 匈奴 *xiōngnú*, an Altaic-speaking people, was adopted into Chinese and written as 胡 *hú* meaning *foreign* more than two millennia ago. Therefore, compound words like 胡桃 *hú-táo* foreign-peach “walnut,” 胡椒 *hú-jiāo* foreign-pepper “pepper” in Chinese, are treated as loan blends that are composed of a loaned morpheme, such as *hú-* 胡, and a native morpheme such as *-táo* and *-jiāo*. Other Middle-Chinese words of this kind of loan blends include 胡人 *hú-rén* “foreigner,” 胡马 *hú-mǎ* “foreign horse,” 胡服 *hú-fú* “foreign clothes,” 胡床 *hú-chuáng* “foreign bed,” and 胡子 *hú-zi* “beard.” In this light, the lack of a good understanding of a foreign language may have led to many modern-Chinese loan blends marked by *hú-*, such as 胡说 *hú-shuō* ~-speak “nonsense,” 胡扯 *hú-chě* ~-pull “nonsense,” 胡写 *hú-xiě* ~-write “write recklessly,” 胡诌 *hú-zhōu* ~-fabricate “tell tall tales,” 胡来 *hú-lái* ~-come “bungle,” 胡说八道 *hú-shuō-bā-dào* ~-say-eight-way “talk rubbish,” and 胡搅蛮缠 *hú-jiǎo-mán-chán* ~-stir-barbaric-tangle “pester endlessly.”

The modern-Chinese morphemes relating to foreign things include 西 *xī* “west,” 洋 *yáng* “ocean,” and 番 *fān* “foreign” that are not loaned morphemes. The association of things foreign with *west* and *ocean* may be due to the fact that most foreigners come from the west and contacts with the west were mostly through ships before airplanes were invented. Therefore, there are Chinese words and phrases like 西瓜 *xī-guā* ~-melon “water melon,” 西红柿 *xī-hóng-shì* ~-red-persimmon “tomato,” 西医 *xī-yī* ~-treat “western medicine/doctor,” 西药 *xī-yào* ~-medicine “western medicine,” 西装 *xī-zhuāng* ~-clothes “western-style clothes” 西餐 *xī-cān* ~-meal “western-style food,” 洋人 *yáng-rén* ~-person “westerner,” 洋妞 *yáng-niū* ~-girl “western girl (slangy),” 洋学生 *yáng-xué-shēng* ~-study-man “foreign student,” 洋葱 *yáng-cōng* ~-onion “onion,” 洋服 *yáng-fú* ~-clothes “western-style clothes,” 洋房 *yángfáng* ~-house “western-style house,” and 洋白菜 *yáng-bái-cài* ~-white-vegetable “cabbage.”

In the Tang dynasty, 番 *fān* was used to refer to the people and states in the area of modern Tibet and Qinghai province. Therefore, 番邦 *fān-bāng*

~-state “foreign state,” 番王 *fān-wáng* ~-king “foreign kings,” 番兵 *fān-bīng* ~-soldier “foreign troops,” 番瓜 *fān-guā* ~-melon “pumpkin,” 番石榴 *fān-shí-liǔ* ~-stone-fruit “pomegranate,” 番木瓜 *fān-mù-guā* ~-wood-melon “papaya,” etc. are still in use in standard Chinese.

After the Opium Wars (1840–58) major powers in the world began to gain concessions of their own in major Chinese port cities like Shanghai, Tianjin, and Guangzhou. They used these strongholds to establish separate spheres of influence with exclusive trading rights for each power in different parts of China. The arrival of a large number of foreign traders and English-speaking sailors brought many English words into Chinese. Chinese traders developed subsequently a kind of English-based language in order to make deals with foreign merchants in China. For instance, an elaborate English-based pidgin was once the lingua franca among traders of various nationalities in the market place along the 洋泾浜 *yángjīngbāng*⁵ creek bordering the southern edge of the British concession in Shanghai. At first, the locals called this kind of English *yángjīngbāng* English. As time progressed, 洋泾浜 *yángjīngbāng*, originally the name of the creek where merchants traded in Shanghai, became the Chinese term for the English word *pidgin*. In this pidgin, the English word *come*, 克姆 [k'ɤ̃mo] as a bilabial nasal sound at the end of a syllable, is not possible in Shanghai dialect. *Father* was 发茶 [faʔzo], *mother* 卖茶 [mɔzo], *one dollar* 文得拉 [vəntɤ̃lɔ], *yes* 也是 [ji ɔzi] (Chinese does not allow a syllable to end with a sibilant), *now* [dis taim] transliterating *this time*, *no* as 拿 [no], *charter* as 差头 [ts' ɔdɤ̃], *sit down* as 雪堂雪堂 [siʔt ɔŋ siʔtɔŋ]. As Chinese is a classifier language, *piece*, realized as [pisi] in the original *yángjīngbāng*, is regularly added to a noun without changing the form of the noun with respect to plurality, such as [tupisi man] for *two men*, and [fopisi tebal] for *four tables* (Shi 2000: 177–9).

Chinese loan words of foreign origin can generally be divided into three major kinds, phonemic loans, loan blends, and semantics-based neologisms. There are many transliterations in standard Chinese that are phonemic loans from various English words, for example, 阿门 *āmén* from *amen*, 吉他 *jītā* from *guitar*, 白兰地 *báilándì* from *brandy*, 夹克 *jiákè* from *jacket*, 尼龙 *nílóng* from *nylon*, 的确凉 *dìquèliáng* from *Dacron*, 比基尼 *bījīnì* from *bikini*, 沙发 *shāfā* from *sofa*, 吐司 *tǔsī* from *toast*, 三明治 *sānmíngzhì* from *sandwich*, 巧克力 *qiǎokèlì* from *chocolate*, 马拉松 *mǎlāsōng* from *marathon*, 扑克 *pūkè* from

poker, 克隆 *kèlóng* from *clone*, 色拉 *sèlā* /沙拉 *shālā* from *salad*, 布丁 *bùdīng* from *pudding*, 的士 *dīshì* from *taxi*, 巴士 *bāshì* from *bus*, and 摩登 *módéng* from *modern*.

There are also many loan blends, words that are jointly formed by loaned and native morphemes, such as 卡车 *kǎ-chē* car-car for *truck*, 吉普车 *jípǔ-chē* jeep-~ for *sports-utilities vehicle*, 摩托车 *mótuō-chē* motor-~ for *motorcycle*, 华尔兹舞 *huáěrzi-wǔ* waltz-dance for *waltz*, 迷你裙 *mínǐ-qún* mini-skirt for *mini-skirt*, 威化饼 *wēihuà-bǐng* wafer-cookies for *wafer cookies*, 苏打饼 *sūdǎ-bǐng* soda-~ for *crackers*, 比萨饼 *bǐsà-bǐng* pizza-~ for *pizza*, 啤酒 *pí-jiǔ* beer-liquor for *beer*, 香槟酒 *xiāngbīng-jiǔ* champagne-~ for *champagne*, 酒吧 *jiǔ-bā* liquor-bar for *bar*, 水吧 *shuǐ-bā* water-~ for a bar that serves soft drinks only, and 摆乌龙 *bǎi wūlóng* display-wrong “make mistakes” with *wūlóng* standing for *wrong*.

Sometimes a borrowed word takes on a life of its own leading to an innovation that changes the original form and meaning beyond recognition. For example, the combination of the English words *handsome* and *maid* first gave rise to a Cantonese word 咸水妹 [ham føy mui] meaning prostitute (Gao and Liu 1958). Later, the word *handsome* was metaphorically extended, as a phonemic loan, to become the neologized Cantonese word 咸湿 [hamfɛ p] meaning “pornographic.” Ultimately, [ham] as a bound root in Cantonese, which rhymes with the word meaning *salt*, takes on the meaning of *porn* as in 咸片 [hamp’in] *porn movies*, 咸猪手 [hamtʃyʃɛu] *porn-pig-hand* for *an (indecent) touching hand* that has very little to do with the original meaning represented the English word *handsome*.

The English word *typhoon* gives rise to a round-trip phonemic loan in standard Chinese. Originally, *typhoon* is a Chinese word loaned into English transliterating the Cantonese word for 大风 *dà-fēng* “gusty wind,” but a modern Chinese word 台风 *táifēng* is a phonemic loan from the English loan *typhoon*, thus making the original Cantonese 大风 complete a round-trip journey back into the language with a related yet different meaning.

Starting in the seventeenth century, a systematic study of the Chinese language was undertaken by the Jesuits who were then engaging in missionary activities in China. Later on, Chinese priests, diplomats and students returning from Europe began to publish travel reports in Chinese about their experiences in Europe and America, as well as Chinese translations of important

Western books. For example, within the Confucian tradition, 小学 *xiǎo-xué* and 大学 *dà-xué* designate the body of knowledge a child should acquire and the body of knowledge a gentleman-scholar should possess respectively. However, according to Masini (1993: 16), neologisms like 学校 *xué-xiào* study-revise “school,” 小学 *xiǎo-xué* small-study “elementary school,” 中学 *zhōng-xué* middle-study “middle school,” 大学 *dà-xué* great-study “university” can be found used as such as early as the eighteenth century in a travel report introducing the school system in Portugal by a Chinese Jesuit after an extensive visit of Europe and Latin America.

In the nineteenth century, China began to be exposed to Western philosophy and various academic disciplines on a large scale, generating a multitude of phonemic loans and neologisms that were not simply a matter of transliteration. In the course of translating Western words into Chinese, European missionaries and the Japanese played the most significant roles in forging neologisms in the Chinese language. Many neologisms were first adopted by missionaries through utilizing traditional Chinese morphemes. Furthermore, most of these morphemes became popular in Japan first and then were reintroduced back into Chinese as the Chinese people developed a better understanding of Western ideas in the twentieth century. For example, the compound word 民主 *mínzhǔ* people-host for *democracy* was first used as such in China in the nineteenth-century missionary translations. However, during the May 4th movement, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the most common Chinese rendition standing for *democracy* was a phonemic loan 德谟克拉西 *démòkèlāxī*, or 德先生 *dé-xiānshēng* democracy-Mr. for short, in spite of the fact that the word 民主 was already at the time commonly used in Japanese. Later on, this exported Chinese neologism returned to China as *mínzhǔ* for *democracy* is now the standard word in all Chinese-speaking communities. This process occurred with many other words including: 代数 *dàishù* “algebra,” 电池 *diànchí* “battery,” 国会 *guóhuì* “parliament,” 日报 *rìbào* “daily newspaper,” 离婚 *lìhūn* “divorce,” 义务 *yìwù* “obligation,” 入口 *rùkǒu* “import,” 地球 *dìqiú* “earth,” 医院 *yīyuàn* “hospital,” 进口 *jìnkǒu* “entrance,” 文学 *wénxué* “literature,” 会议 *huìyì* “meeting,” 石油 *shíyóu* “petroleum,” 动物 *dòngwù* “animals,” 特权 *tèquán* “privilege,” 权利 *quánlì* “right,” 主权 *zhǔquán* “sovereignty,” 电报 *diànbào* “telegraph,” 交易 *jiāoyì* “trade,” and so on and so forth (Liu 1995).

Other Sino-Japanese-European loanwords, or Japanese neologisms translating European words that are written in Chinese characters, were also borrowed into Chinese extensively such as 抽象 *chōuxiàng* “abstract,” 广告 *guǎnggào* “advertisement,” 领空 *lǐngkōng* “airspace,” 银行 *yínháng* “bank,” 癌 *ái* “cancer,” 民法 *mínfǎ* “civil code,” 建筑 *jiànzhù* “architecture,” 俱乐部 *jùlèbù* “club,” 高潮 *gāocháo* “climax,” 消毒 *xiāodú* “disinfect,” 元素 *yuánsù* “element,” 体操 *tǐcāo* “gymnastics,” 工厂 *gōngchǎng* “factory,” 农场 *nóngchǎng* “farm,” 财政 *cáizhèng* “finance,” 卫生 *wèishēng* “hygiene,” 工业 *gōngyè* “industry,” 巨头 *jùtóu* “tycoon,” 国际 *guójì* “international,” 米 *mǐ* “meter,” 情报 *qíngbào* “information,” 指数 *zhǐshù* “index number,” 民族 *mínzú* “race,” 营养 *yíngyǎng* “nutrition,” 乘客 *chéngkè* “passenger,” 哲学 *zhéxué* “philosophy,” 政策 *zhèngcè* “policy,” 校长 *xiàozhǎng* “schoolmaster,” 报告 *bàogào* “report,” 学期 *xuéqī* “semester,” 间谍 *jiàndié* “spy,” 剧场 *jùchǎng* “theater,” 真空 *zhēnkōng* “vacuum,” 版画 *bǎnhuà* “woodcut,” 年度 *niándù* “annual,” 业务 *yèwù* “vocation,” and 宣誓 *xuānshì* “vow” (Liu 1995).

Chinese also has many Sino-Japanese loanwords that are of Japanese origin, such as 场合 *chǎnghé* “occasion,” 场面 *chǎngmiàn* “scene,” 服务 *fúwù* “service,” 大本营 *dàběnyíng* “headquarters,” 目标 *mùbiāo* “goal,” 方针 *fānzhēn* “direction,” 克服 *kèfú* “overcome,” 距离 *jùlí* “distance,” 内容 *nèiróng* “content,” 支部 *zhībù* “local chapter,” 处女作 *chǔnǚzuò* “literary debut,” 集团 *jítuán* “group,” 宗教 *zōngjiào* “religion,” 手续 *shǒuxù* “procedures,” 取缔 *qǔdì* “outlaw,” and 要点 *yàodiǎn* “gist” (Gao and Liu 1958).

Many Chinese words like 文化 *wén-huà* “culture” that were at first used by Chinese literati at different times denoting different meanings were adopted in Japanese to translate European words and later found their way back into Chinese to represent different ideas relating to essential aspects of modern life in the twentieth century. These include 绝对 *juéduì* “absolute,” 会计 *kuàijì* “accountant,” 活动 *huódòng* “activity,” 行政 *xíngzhèng* “administration,” 申请 *shēnqǐng* “apply,” 算术 *suàنشù* “arithmetic,” 学士 *xuéshì* “bachelor,” 破产 *pòchǎn* “bankruptcy,” 基地 *jīdì* “base,” 营业 *yíngyè* “in business,” 资本 *zīběn* “capital,” 世纪 *shìjì* “century,” 流通 *liútōng* “circulation,” 国民 *guómín* “citizen,” 古典 *gùdiǎn* “classical,” 宪法 *xiànfǎ* “constitution,” 会话 *huìhuà* “conversation,” 批评 *pīpíng* “criticize,” 作物 *zuòwù* “crop,” 经济 *jīngjì* “economy,” 希望 *xīwàng* “hope,” 人道 *réndào* “humanity,” 指导 *zhǐdǎo* “guidance,” 想象 *xiǎngxiàng* “imagine,” 个人 *gèrén* “individual,” 知识 *zhīshi* “knowledge,”

地主 *dìzhǔ* “landlord,” 解放 *jiěfàng* “liberation,” 市场 *shìchǎng* “market,” 经理 *jīnglǐ* “manager,” 运动 *yùndòng* “movement,” 方法 *fāngfǎ* “method,” 自然 *zìrán* “nature,” 乐观 *lèguān* “optimistic,” 公园 *gōngyuán* “park,” 时代 *shídài* “era,” 流行 *liúxíng* “popular,” 进步 *jìnbù* “progress,” 改造 *gǎizào* “reform,” 共和 *gònghé* “republic,” 革命 *gémìng* “revolution,” 讽刺 *fěngcǐ* “satire,” 自我 *zìwǒ* “self,” 演说 *yǎnshuō* “speech,” 投机 *tóujī* “speculation,” 广场 *guǎngchǎng* “square,” 理论 *lǐlùn* “theory,” 思想 *sīxiǎng* “thought,” 时间 *shíjiān* “time,” 传统 *chuántǒng* “tradition,” 交通 *jiāotōng* “traffic,” 仓库 *cāngkù* “warehouse,” 意志 *yìzhì* “will,” and 世界 *shìjiè* “world” (Liu 1995).

In the twentieth century, the Japanese language also enriched Chinese morphology by loaning various formants into the language, such as a prefix like 反 “anti-” in 反党 *fǎn-dǎng* “anti-party,” 反华 *fǎn-huá* “anti-China,” 反革命 *fǎn-gémìng* “counter-revolution,” a bound root like 感 *gǎn* “feeling” in 美感 *méi-gǎn* pretty-~ “aesthetic feeling,” 好感 *hǎo-gǎn* good-~ “favorable impression,” 敏感 *mǐn-gǎn* sensitive-~ “sensitivity,” 性感 *xìng-gǎn* sex-~ “sexy,” a bound root like 炎 *yán* “-itis” such as 脑炎 *nǎo-yán* brain-~ “encephalitis,” 肠炎 *cháng-yán* intestine-~ “enteritis,” 关节炎 *guānjié-yán* joint-~ “arthritis,” 肺炎 *fèi-yán* lung-~ “pneumonia,” a suffix like 化 *huà* “-ization” such as 自动化 *zì-dòng-huà* self-move-~ “automation,” 退化 *tuì-huà* retreat-~ “degeneration,” 一般化 *yī-bān-huà* one-so-~ “generalization,” 理想化 *lǐxiǎng-huà* ideal-~ “idealization,” 现代化 *xiàndài-huà* modern-~ “modernization,” a nominalizing suffix like 性 *xìng* “quality” such as 偶然性 *ǒurán-xìng* chance-~ “contingency,” 创造性 *chuàngzào-xìng* create-~ “creativity,” 习惯性 *xíguàn-xìng* habit-~ “habituality,” 必然性 *bìrán-xìng* inevitable-~ “inevitability,” 可能性 *kěnéng-xìng* possible-~ “possibility,” 理性 *lǐ-xìng* theory-~ “reasoning,” and 诱惑性 *yòuhuò-xìng* seductive-~ “seductiveness.”

Neologisms for European words, particularly those that were created in the last fifty years or so, frequently have different forms in mainland China and Taiwan, as a result of the political separation in China. For example, in spite of the differences in dialectal pronunciation, 美国 “America” and 按摩 “massage” are pretty much the same in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan as they are neologisms officially adopted before 1949 when the People’s Republic was founded in the mainland. However, as a former colony where Chinese sovereignty was restored only in 1997 after about 150 years of British rule, Hong Kong Cantonese is marked by a large number of phonemic loans from

Table 6.2 Chinese terms for European words in three Chinese communities,⁶ adapted from Shi 2000: 82–83.

Mainland China	Hong Kong	Taiwan	English
表演/演出	骚/表演	秀/表演	show
biǎoyǎn/yǎnchū	[fou/piujin]	xiù/biǎoyǎn	
尺寸/尺码	晒士	尺码	size
chíchùn/chímǎ	[fai'fi]	chǐmǎ	
沙发	梳化	沙发	sofa
shāfā	[ʃɔ'fa]	shāfā	
电动机/马达	摩打	马达	motor
diàndòngjī/mǎdá	[mɔ'ta]	mǎdá	
卡片	咭	卡片	card
kǎpiàn	[k' a]	kǎpiàn	
奶油	忌廉	奶油	cream
nǎiyóu	[keinim]	nǎiyóu	
大型客机	珍宝机	珍宝机/大型客机	jumbo jet
dàxíng kèjī	[tʃ'empoukei]	zhēnbǎo jī/dàxíng kèjī	
生鱼片	鱼生/刺身	沙西米	sashimi
shēngyúpiàn	[jy'fan'ts'if'ɛn]	shāxīmǐ	
按摩	按摩	按摩/马杀鸡	massage
ànmó	[ɔnmɔ]	ànmō/mǎshājī	
导弹	导弹/飞弹	飞弹	guided missile
dǎodàn	[toutan/feitān]	fēidàn	
激光	镭射	镭射	laser
jīguāng	[ləy'ʃe]	léishè	
维生素	维他命	维他命	vitamin
wéishēngsù	[weit'amin]	wéitāmìng	
迪斯科/崩地	的士高	迪斯科	disco
dísīkē/bēngdì	[tik'fikou]	dísītēke	
布什	布殊	布希	Bush
bùshí	[pou' y]	bùxī	
尼克松	尼克逊	尼克森	Nixon
níkèsōng	[neihe k'ʃɔn]	níkèsēn	
美国	美国	美国	America
měiguó	[meikuək]	měiguó	
冰淇淋	雪糕	冰淇淋	ice cream
bīngqǐlín	[f'ikou]	bīngqǐlín	

English. Although Chinese neologisms in mainland China and Taiwan in many ways have much more in common than those in Hong Kong, they do differ from each other in translating European words that came into being within the last fifty years or so, such as *missile*, *laser*, *vitamin*, *disco*, *Bush*, and *Nixon*. Given the political separation between the two sides of the Taiwan

Straits, it is inconceivable that these linguistic terms can be standardized into common words across all Chinese-speaking communities. Table 6.2 shows how various words of European origin are standardized in these three Chinese-speaking communities.

6.3 Neologisms and morpheme-syllable script

Chinese neologisms either coined by the European missionaries or adopted from Japanese are marked by one common feature, i.e., Chinese speakers favor neologisms with formants that shed some light on the semantics of a newly coined word more than phonemic loans that simply transliterate the sounds of a European word in the original language. Phonemic loans are plenty, such as the English *OK* and *bye-bye* that are now commonly used by many and understood by nearly all Chinese. Shi (2000: 189) observes in a 1903 Chinese dictionary, 新尔雅 *xīn'ěryǎ* published in Shanghai that the ratio between Chinese words that are semantically motivated Japanese loaned words, including missionary-Chinese loans and those of Japanese coinage, and Chinese words that are phonemic loans from Japan is 2728:21 (or 130:1). In another dictionary 现代汉语新词新语辞典 *xiàndài hànyǔ xīncí xīnyǔ cídiǎn* “A dictionary on new Chinese words and expressions” (Yu 1994), among the 7,655 words of foreign origin, there are only sixty-five phonemic loans (Shi 2000) making up only 0.89% of the total number of loans. Even Cantonese, which has supposedly adopted the most English phonemic loans of any dialect, still has semantically motivated loans like 雪糕 [ʃi-kou] ice-cake for *ice cream*, in spite of the fact that standard Chinese in mainland China and Taiwan adopts a loan blend 冰激淋 *bīng-jīlín* ice-cream. Other than Chinese words of Sanskrit origin, many previously phonemic loans now have been replaced by terms that contain semantically more salient morphemes. For example, the phonemic loan *démókèlǎxī* for *democracy* has been replaced by 民主 *mínzhǔ* people-host, 赛因斯 *sàiyīnsī* for *science* by 科学 *kē-xué* discipline-study, 派司 *pàisī* for *pass* by 月票 *yuè-piào* month-ticket, 麦克风 *màikèfēng* for *microphone* by 话筒 *huà-tóng* word-tube, 德律风 *télǜfēng* for *telephone* by 电话 *diànhuà* electric word, and 迪斯科 *dísīkē* for *disco* by 崩地 *bēngdì* burst-ground.

There are also exceptions to the replacement trend as phonemic loans like 逻辑 *luóji* “logic” have replaced the semantically more salient neologism 伦理学 *lúnlǐ-xué* theory-science, 沙发 *shāfā* “sofa” replacing 安乐椅

ān-lè-yǐ safe-happy-chair, and 穆斯林 *mùsīlīn* “Muslim” replacing 回教徒 *huíjiào-tú* Muslim-religion-student. It remains to be seen if these exceptions, taken together with generally accepted English words *Okay*, *Bye-bye*, *Daddy*, *Mommy*, etc. and the large number of phonemic loans in Hong Kong, suggest that as more and more Chinese people become bilingual in Chinese and English, English phonemic loans will increase in the future.

In many cases, the sounds in the original language are still a very relevant factor in Chinese involving cross-cultural communication. As a matter of fact, some of the most successful Chinese neologisms for European words are frequently semantic and phonemic at the same time, such as 迷你裙 *mí-nǐ-qún* charm-you-skirt for *mini-skirt* (loan blend), 霓虹灯 *ní-hóng-dēng* neon-rainbow-light for *neon light* (loan blend loan), 酷 *kù* cool for *cool*, 脱口秀 *tuō-kǒu-xiù* cast-mouth-pretty for *talk show*, 维生素/维他命 *wéi-shēng-sù/wéi-tā-mìng* (the latter is more commonly used in Hong Kong and Taiwan, whereas the former is basically a mainland China usage) sustain-life-ingredient/sustain-other-life for *vitamin*, 高露洁 *gāo-lù-jié* high-expose-clean for *Colgate*, 七喜 *qī-xǐ* seven-happiness for *7up*, 雪碧 *xuě-bì* snow-jade for *Sprite*, 可口可乐 *kěkǒu-kělè* tasteful-delightful for *Coca Cola*, and 百事可乐 *bǎi-shì-kělè* hundred-matter-delightful for *Pepsi Cola*. etc. There are two Chinese short forms for *AIDS*; whereas one, 艾滋病 *àizī-bìng* Aids-illness, commonly used in mainland China is a loan blend with a phonemic part plus a Chinese morpheme representing *illness*, the one commonly used in Hong Kong and Taiwan is a loan blend that is semantic and phonemic at the same time, 爱滋病 *ài-zī-bìng* love-arise-illness. In the latter case, the morpheme *ài* “love” suggests that this is a disease that has something to do with sex.

However, the more dominant factor in Chinese is semantic motivation. An important part of coining a new word necessitates the selection of characters for the word. Unlike European languages that have their scripts directly related to the speech sounds of a language, Chinese script (see chapter 4) is a logographic system with each grapheme (or character) simultaneously encoding sounds and meaning at the level of syllable. In other words, each Chinese character signals a string of sounds (a syllable) and a morpheme at the same time. It was observed in chapter 5 that Chinese script also functions as a very useful means in disambiguating homophonous morphemes. As far as coining new words is concerned, the selected characters for a new word always carry with them the meanings that have always been associated with them. In

translating a foreign word, carefully selected characters can help reveal the meaning of a new word. For this reason, semantically revealing coinages are more favored than pure phonemic loans. The best Chinese words for various things foreign, particularly brand names for imported commercial products, become those that are a phonetically similar representation in Chinese of the original form and that are also semantically most revealing.

Consistent with the semantic implications of Chinese script, there is a set of Chinese characters commonly used by the media in transliterating names of foreigners who do not have a Chinese name. For example, the Chinese names for *Clinton* is 克林顿 *kèlín dùn* in China and 柯林顿 *kēlín dùn* in Taiwan. A Chinese reader of this name would instantly recognize it as the name of a foreigner. As a matter of fact, a more Chinese-like name such as 郭蔺东 *guōlín dōng* which resembles the English sounds in *Clinton* more would not be as appropriate because it does not identify the person as foreign. Just imagine what an American would think upon reading a headline *Chinese President Jimmy Zimmer arrives in Washington for a three-day state visit* in an American newspaper! Even if *Jimmy Zimmer* may bear a strong phonetic resemblance to a Chinese President's name, who would think that this is a serious piece of news, given the cultural expectation in the United States? Some examples of Chinese transliterations for foreign names are: 苏珊 *sūshān* for *Susan*, 南西 *nánxī* for *Nancy*, 希拉里 *xīlālǐ* for *Hilary*, 劳拉 *láo lā* for *Laura*, 伊丽莎白 *yīlìshābái* for *Elizabeth*, 约翰 *yuēhàn* for *John*, 威廉 *wēilián* for *William*, 乔治 *qiáozhì* for *George*, 大卫 *dàwěi* for *David*, 安德鲁 *āndélǔ* for *Andrew*, 菲利普 *fēilìpǔ* for *Philip*, 布什 *bùshí* for *Bush*, 林肯 *línkěn* for *Lincoln*, 贝克 *bèikè* for *Baker*, 普京 *pǔjīng* for *Putin*, 鲍威尔 *bàowēi'ěr* for *Powell*, 赖斯 *làisī* for *Rice*, 戈尔巴乔夫 *gē'ěrbāqiáofū* for *Gorbachev*, 安南 *ānnán* for *Annan*, 希拉克 *xīlākè* for *Chirac*, as well as many other names of various nationalities.

The corresponding shortened forms for many internationally well-known names are, like most Chinese neologisms, semantically based in nature. There is no Chinese acronym for the United Nations like the English *UN*. Furthermore, *联合国 *liánguó* makes no sense in Chinese. *UN* must be rendered in its entirety, 联合国 *liánhé-guó* alliance-state “United Nations.” There is a Chinese short form for *UNESCO*, 联合国教科文组织 *liánhé-guó jiào-kē-wén zǔzhī* UN-ESC-organization in which ESC is represented by the initial syllables *jiào-kē-wén* standing for the disyllabic words, 教育 *jiàoyù* 科学 *kēxué* 文化 *wénhuà* “education, science, culture” respectively. The shortened form *WHO*

for *World Health Organization* 世界卫生组织 *shìjiè-wèishēng-zǔzhī* world-health-organization is 世卫 *shì-wèi* world-health in Chinese. *The United States of America* is 美利坚合众国 *měilìjiān hézhòngguó* America-United States, but *USA* in Chinese is 美国 *měi-guó* beautiful-state.

Place names, in general, follow the sounds of the names in the original language, as most place names do not carry any specific meaning. Examples include: 加利福尼亚 *jiālìfūnǐyà* for *California*, 俄罗斯 *éluósī* for *Russia*, 法兰西 *fǎlǎnxī* for *France*, 伦敦 *lúndūn* for *London*, 莫斯科 *mòsīkē* for *Moscow*, 马德里 *mǎdélǐ* for *Madrid*, 新加坡 *xīnjiāpō* for *Singapore*, 利马 *límǎ* for *Lima*, 金士顿 *jīnshìdùn* for *Kingston*, and 纽约 *niǔyue* for *New York*. The shortened form for *France* is a loan blend 法国 *fǎ-guó* with a Chinese morpheme *-guó* standing for a country. Similarly the shortened name 英国 *yīngguó* for *the United Kingdom* 联合王国 *liánhé wángguó* (a semantic coinage) is a loan blend with *yīng-* following the sounds of the word *English*.

However, there are a few place names that are formed mostly in accord with semantics such as *Lake Placid*, 平静湖 *píng-jìng-hú* peace-quiet-lake, *Salt Lake City*, 盐湖城 *yán-hú-chéng* salt-lake-city, *Buffalo*, 水牛城 *shuǐniú-chéng* buffalo-city, *Littlerock*, 小石城 *xiǎo-shí-chéng* little-rock-city. The Chinese name for San Francisco 旧金山 *jiù-jīn-shān* old-gold-hill is totally semantic reflecting the fact that it used to be the port city where many Chinese immigrants arrived during the Gold Rush, and eventually became the largest Chinese-speaking community in the USA at the end of the nineteenth century. Occasionally, characters with suitable meanings are used to transliterate a place name such as 漪色佳 *yī-sè-jiā* ripple-color-beautiful for *Ithaca* in upstate New York, 优山美地 *yōu-shān-měi-dì* distinguished-hill-beautiful-place for the scenic *Yosemite* in California. There are also place names that are semantic and phonemic in Chinese such as 圣迭戈 *shèng-diégē* saint-Diego for *San Diego*, 圣荷西 *shèng-héxī* saint-Jose for *San Jose*, and 圣安东尼奥 *shèng-āndōngniào* saint-Antonio for *San Antonio*, in which 圣 *shèng* as a morpheme meaning “saint” for *San* is both phonemic and semantic, and the rest of each name is phonetic. Some places inside the territory of China which contain a large population of an ethnic group are still named phonetically after the pronunciations in their non-Han language such as 呼和浩特 *hūhéhàotè* for *Huhehot* (the capital city of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region), 拉萨 *lāsà* for *Lhasa* (the capital city of the Tibetan Autonomous Region), and 乌鲁木齐 *wūlǔmùqí* for *Urumqi* (the capital city of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region).

6.4 Summary

Pertaining to the interface between Chinese language and culture, this chapter reviews various Chinese expressions in relation to various cultural underpinnings associated with different philosophies, cultural beliefs, and foreign influences. For example, addressing each other as brother and sister is consistent with the Confucian teaching about *all within the four seas are brothers*. Many of the idiomatic expressions commonly used in everyday speech actually originated from the influential religious beliefs in Buddhism and Daoism. The cultural beliefs in associating various human feelings with different body parts also explain why internal organs such as *liver, gall, intestine, and lungs*, make up such a large number of words in many Chinese idioms representing different kinds of feelings metaphorically. Moreover, another body part, *face*, is metaphorically used to highlight two social desires, to be socially respected and to maintain high moral standards, as are marked by various Chinese expressions in relation to *face*.

Chinese loaned words of foreign origin are divided into three major categories, phonemic loans, loan blends, and semantics-based neologisms. Corresponding to the logographic writing system, in choosing between phonemic loans and semantics-based neologisms, Chinese in general favors semantics-based coinage such as the terms for *telephone, democracy*, etc. However, the most successful neologisms for European words are those that are semantic and phonemic at the same time such as *mí-nǐ-qún* charm-you-skirt for *mini-skirt*. It is first of all a loan blend as *qún* is not a transliteration for *skirt*, whereas *mí-nǐ* is also phonemic as they truly transliterate *mini-* in English. However, the selection of the two Chinese characters 迷你 to represent *mini-* may be a most important factor for its success as they mean “to charm you” in Chinese.

FURTHER READING

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NOTES

1. Translation is mine.
2. Translation by James Legge, *Confucian Analects* 153.
3. No idioms relating to internal organs are found in the *water* category.
4. Such a distinction between *liǎn* and *miàn-zi* in standard Chinese needs not exist in the language of other Chinese dialects. For example, in Cantonese there is only one word *miàn* 面 encompassing both meanings.
5. 洋泾浜 *yángjīngbāng* creek no longer exists in the City of Shanghai, but it was once situated around the current 延安东路 *yánān dōnglù* near the Bund before it dried up.
6. Many examples in this table are taken from Shi (2000).

7 Chinese syntax 1

In the previous chapters, the nature of the Chinese sound system, morphology, writing and their interface with culture have been introduced. However, words in a sentence are much more than simply a sequence but are patterns and regularities. The study of syntax is about the organization of words into phrases, and subsequently phrases into sentences. In this chapter, we will discuss lexical categories, phrase-structure rules, negation, sentence types and various related issues in Chinese syntax that will enhance a student's knowledge of Chinese grammar.

Generally speaking, words in a language can be listed in a dictionary; the better the dictionary, the more comprehensive its listing of words. However, unlike words, sentences are not finite in number, and thus can never be thoroughly listed through compiling a dictionary of sentences. For example, adding 我请 *wǒ qǐng* "I invite" to a sentence like (7.1a) 他喝酒 *tā hē jiǔ* "he drinks wine" will result in a new sentence *I invited him to drink wine*. Similarly adding 爸爸要 *bàba yào* "Dad wants" to (7.1b) generates still another new sentence *Dad wanted me to invite him to drink wine* in (7.1c). Therefore, sentences in a language are not finite in number and thus can never be thoroughly listed in any sensible way.

- (7.1) a. 他喝酒。
tā hē jiǔ
3rd drink wine
"He drinks wine."
- b. 我请他喝酒。
wǒ qǐng tā hē jiǔ
1st invite 3rd drink wine
"I invited him to drink wine."

- c. 爸爸要我请他喝酒。

bàba yào wǒ qǐng tā hē jiǔ
 papa want 1st invite 3rd drink wine
 “Dad wanted me to invite him to drink wine.”

- d. *酒喝他

jiǔ hē tā
 wine drink 3rd

In spite of the infinite possibilities, Chinese speakers of the same dialect can understand and communicate with each other using sentences that they may never have heard before. This ability, or linguistic competence, of a native speaker to understand totally new sentences generated with the vocabulary of the language, therefore, can never be described adequately in a dictionary. In this chapter we will discuss the linear order, lexical categories, semantic roles, hierarchical structure, and phrase-structure rules in Chinese syntax. These rules can be considered to enable Chinese speakers to produce and understand grammatical sentences in natural discourse.

7.1 Linear order, lexical categories, subcategorization, and semantic roles

The most remarkable feature of syntax is the linear order of words in a sentence. In a language like Chinese that has very little morphology comparable to the relatively large set of English morphemes (*-ion*, *-ly*, *-ness*, *-ed*, *-ing*, etc.), word order is particularly important in defining different types of words. For example, if the words in (7.1a) were scrambled to become (7.1d) *酒喝他 *jiǔ hē tā* and spoken without any pause, it would not be a meaningful, or grammatically correct, sentence. Moreover, for the lack of a richer morphology, the restricted word order can be used to identify parts of speech, or lexical categories. For example, the word order in the sentences of (7.2) shows that 我 *wǒ*, 弟弟 *dìdì*, 黑马 *hēi mǎ*, and 白马 *bái mǎ* belong to the same lexical category because, as we observe from (7.1d), Chinese word order is not free. The flexibility of these words in occurring at the beginnings, or ends, of the sentences in (7.2) must then be due to some common syntactic property. The sentences in (7.2) also show that words of this kind can be placed either before or after

another kind of word like 骑 *qí* “ride,” 踢 *tī* “kick,” and 跑 *pǎo* “run” that regularly make up these grammatical sentences. Therefore, the linear order of words in (7.1) and (7.2) demonstrates that there are, at least, two mutually exclusive Chinese lexical categories that we may name, following linguistic tradition, as *nouns* and *verbs*.

According to this method, Chinese lexical categories, traditionally known as parts of speech, can be defined in terms of the linear order of words in grammatical sentences. The syntactic property of a noun dictates that a noun can occur either before or after a verb. Following this logic, 黑 *hēi* “black” and 白 *bái* “white” are then words of still another kind as they regularly occur in front of a noun. They thus are members of a third lexical category that is commonly known as *adjectives*.

- (7.2) a. 我骑黑马
 wǒ qí hēi mǎ
 1st ride black horse
 “I ride a black horse.”
- b. 弟弟骑白马
 dìdì qí bái mǎ
 brother ride white horse
 “My younger brother rides a white horse.”
- c. 白马踢黑马
 bái mǎ tī hēi mǎ
 white horse kick black horse
 “The white horse kicks the black horse.”
- d. 黑马跑了
 hēi mǎ pǎo le
 black horse run CRS
 “The black horse has run (away).”
- e. *我骑
 wǒ qí
 1st ride

Without an appropriate context, the sentence in (7.2e) sounds incomplete and is, thus, ungrammatical because the syntactic property of the verb *qí* “ride” requires a preceding noun and a following noun to form a grammatical

sentence. Every verb in a language's lexicon, traditionally known as *dictionary*, has a subcategorization frame (the number of nominals that a verb must co-occur with), i.e., a transitive verb is subcategorized for two arguments, and an intransitive verb is subcategorized for one argument. For example, *pǎo* "to run" in (7.2d), as an intransitive verb, is subcategorized for one argument, thus allowing a sentence to be grammatical with just a noun preceding it. Nevertheless, the transitive verb *qí* "to ride" in the sentence (7.2e) is not grammatical because there is not a clearly preceded referent, or antecedent, in the context that can function as the second argument. Since sentences (7.2a) and (7.2b) have the two subcategorized arguments required for a transitive verb, they are correct. The sentence in (7.2e) is ungrammatical, if there is not a clearly preceded referent, or antecedent, in a given discourse. A ditransitive verb is a verb that is subcategorized for three arguments, such as the verb *gěi* "to give" in (7.3), which has three arguments (three nouns), *wǒ* "1st person pronoun," *lǎo-zhāng* "Old Zhang," and *sān-běn shū* "three books." The suffixal *-le* in (7.3) is a morphologically bound morpheme that can only be attached to a verb. As no noun can be marked by *-le* as a suffix, it then becomes a verbal marker that signals the verbal status of all of the lexical items that can co-occur with it grammatically.

- (7.3) 我给了老张三本书
 wǒ gěi -le lǎo-zhāng sān-běn shū
 1st give -PFV old-zhang three-CL book
 "I gave Mr. Zhang three books."

The subcategorization frame of a verb determines if it can be used as a one-place predicate (a clause with one argument) such as *pǎo* "to run," a two-place predicate (a clause with two arguments) such as *qí* "to ride," or a three-place predicate (a clause with three arguments) such as *gěi* "to give" in the above sentences.

There is an underlying semantic relationship between each argument of a clause and its predicate, or its verb. In any language, the argument(s) within a given clause can be understood as participants playing roles within the semantic confine of the event, or situation, represented by the verb of a given clause. Therefore, the participant before a verb can have an agent role, i.e., a deliberate initiator of an action. For example, *wǒ* "I" in (7.2a) and *dìdì*

“younger brother” in (7.2b) are both deliberate initiators in the events of *riding a horse*.

The arguments *hēi mǎ* “black horse” and *bái mǎ* “white horse” placed after the two-place predicate *qí* “to ride” in (7.2a and b) respectively are said to play a patient role, i.e., a participant that is somehow affected by the action of an event. With a three-place predicate like the verb *gěi* “to give” in (7.3), *wǒ* as an deliberate initiator of the event of *giving* plays an agent role, the last argument *sān-běn shū* “three books” plays a theme role, and the argument in the middle *lǎo-zhāng* plays the role of recipient.

The participant *Zhāng Sān* in (7.4a) plays a role as an experiencer of the one-place predicate *gāoxìng* “to be happy,” as it does not imply an action that would affect an experiencer. The argument *jiā* “home” in (7.4b) plays the role of goal because *home* is not affected in the same way as the two-place predicates in (7.2). *Jiā* “home” represents the point toward which the agent is moving.

- (7.4) a. 张三高兴了
 zhāng sān gāo-xìng le
 Name Name high-excite CRS
 “Zhang San is (now) happy.”
- b. 张三回家了
 zhāng sān huí jiā le
 Name Name return home CRS
 “Zhang San has gone home.”
- c. 张三是高兴了
 zhāng sān shì gāo-xìng le
 Name Name be high-excite CRS
 “Zhang San is (now truly) happy.”
- d. 张三不高兴了
 zhāng sān bú gāo-xìng le
 Name Name NEG high-excite CRS
 “Zhang San is (now truly) unhappy.”
- e. 张三是中国人
 zhāng sān shì zhōngguó rén
 Name Name be Chinese person
 “Zhang San is Chinese.”

Arguments can be an agent (causer) that initiates some action, an experiencer that experiences some psychological state, and a patient (or theme) that undergoes the effect of some action, a recipient that receives the theme, or a goal towards which something moves (Radford 1997).

While a copular verb must be used in an English sentence with an adjective as its main predicate, a Chinese adjective can function like an intransitive verb or as a sentence's main predicate. For example, in English a copular, or a linking verb, must be used when an adjective takes up the predicate position. Without a copular like *is*, **He happy* is not acceptable in English. In contrast, a Chinese adjective such as the one in (7.4a) *gāoxìng* "happy" takes up the predicate position without a copular. In other words, most adjectives in Chinese are subcategorized as one-place predicates. The copular, *shì*, such as the one in (7.4c), is optionally used when the following adjectival predicate needs to be emphasized. However, in negation of the adjectival predicate, the copular is normally not used. When the main predicate is a nominal such as *zhōngguó rén* "Chinese person" in (7.4e), a copular must be used either in a positive or in a negative sentence.

A Chinese adjective can be marked by a relative marker *de*, written as 的, placed in front of the noun it modifies. Therefore, *hēi mǎ* 黑马 "black horse" can also be rendered as *hēi de mǎ* 黑的马 with the same meaning. The toneless *de* is then a phrasal clitic indicating that the following noun has a modifier before it. Furthermore, adjectives can be divided into two kinds, scalar and absolute. A scalar adjective such as *hǎo* "to be good" denotes a property that can be calibrated in degrees and can be modified by an adverb like *hěn* 很 "very" in (7.5a). An absolute adjective denotes a property that cannot be calibrated and normally cannot be modified by the degree adverb as is exemplified by the ungrammatical sentence in (7.5b).

- (7.5) a. 这个答案很好
 zhè-ge dá`àn hěn hǎo
 DEM-CL answer very good
 "This answer is very good."
- b. *这个答案很错了
 zhè-ge dá`àn hěn cuò le
 DEM-CL answer very wrong CRS

- c. 这个答案错了
 zhè-ge dá'àn cuò le
 DEM-CL answer wrong CRS
 “This answer is wrong.”

7.2 Other lexical categories

In addition to *verbs*, *nouns*, and *adjectives*, Chinese lexical categories include *adverbs*, *auxiliaries*, *prepositions*, *pronouns*, *classifiers*, *determiners* (for more discussion on pronouns, classifiers, determiners please refer to sections 7.3–7.5), and a set of sentence-final particles (see chapter 4). Members of these lexical categories in a sentence are related through the subcategorization frame of the sentence’s predicate in the lexicon. In order to generate a clause, there must be a verb subcategorizing a certain number of arguments to make up the necessary participant(s) for a meaningful event or situation. Therefore, the subcategorized positions discussed in the last section are called argument positions. However, lexical categories like adverbs, auxiliaries, and prepositions are essentially modifiers of a clause. A syntactic clause, as long as there is the necessary verb with its subcategorized argument positions filled, will be grammatical even without the optional modifiers. Thus, the optional positions in a clause are commonly referred to as non-argument positions.

Typically, a Chinese adverb follows the noun at the beginning of a clause but precedes the verb of the clause such as *tiāntiān* “everyday” and *dōu* “all” in (7.6). Li and Thompson (1981: 321–55) observe that time and attitude adverbs are movable and can be placed to the beginning of a clause modifying the entire clause such as *tiān-tiān* “everyday” in (7.6b) and *xiǎnrán* in (7.6d). Other movable attitude adverbs include 也许 *yěxǔ* “perhaps,” 大概 *dàgài* “approximately,” 究竟 *jiūjìng* “in the end,” 原来 *yuánlái* “originally,” 突然 *tūrán* “suddenly,” and 其实 *qíshí* “in fact.”

- (7.6) a. 他天天都上班
 tā tiān-tian dōu shàng bān
 3rd day-day all up shift
 “He goes to work every day.”

- b. 天天他都上班
 tiān-tian tā dōu shàng bān
 day-day 3rd all up shift
 “Every day he goes to work.”
- c. *都他天天上班
 dōu tā tiān-tian shàng bān
 all 3rd day-day up shift
- d. 她今天显然很高兴
 tā jīn -tiān xiǎnrán hěn gāo-xìng
 3rd this -day obvious very high-excited
 “She is obviously very happy today.”
- e. 显然他今天很高兴
 xiǎnrán tā jīn -tiān hěn gāo -xìng
 obvious 3rd this -day very high -excited
 “Obviously she is very happy today.”

However, not all adverbs are movable, and some can never occupy the position in front of the sentence-initial noun. For example, *dōu* “all” in (7.6c) as an adverb interacting with various pragmatic factors in the discourse cannot occur in the sentence-initial position. Other non-movable adverbs include 又 *yòu* “again,” 就 *jiù* “then,” 经常 *jīngcháng* “frequently,” and 常 (常) *cháng(chang)* “often.”

Typically manner adverbs marked by the adverbial clitic 地 *de* are movable such as those in (7.7a and b). However, at times a sentence with a moved adverb may sound awkward such as the one in (7.7d), when it is not marked by a degree adverb 很 *hěn* “very” and a pause between the moved adverb and the modified sentence.

- (7.7) a. 他们静静地走了
 tā-men jìng -jìng -de zǒu le
 3rd-PL quiet -quiet -AD walk CRS
 “They left quietly.”
- b. 静静地, 他们走了
 jìng -jìng -de tā-men zǒu le
 quiet -quiet -de 3rd-PL walk CRS
 “Quietly, they left.”

- c. 他镇定地说了几句话
 tā zhèn -dìng -de shuō-le jǐ -jù huà
 3rd calm -decided -AD say-PFV several -CL sentence
 “He calmly said a few sentences.”
- d. *镇定地他说了几句话
 zhèn-dìng -de tā shuō-le jǐ -jù huà
 calm-decided -AD 3rd say-PFV several-CL sentence
- e. 很镇定地, 他说了几句话
 hěn zhèn -dìng -de tā shuō-le jǐ -jù huà
 very calm -decided -AD 3rd say-PFV several -CL sentence
 “Very calmly, he said a few sentences.”

Chinese auxiliaries, like adverbs, occur in front of a verb. However, unlike the adverbs, they are not movable such as the one in (7.8c). Furthermore, an auxiliary like *néng* “to be able” can occur all by itself such as in (7.8b) to answer the question in (7.8a).

- (7.8) a. 他能说流利的中文, 你能吗?
 tā néng shuō liúli -de zhōngwén, nǐ néng ma
 3rd can speak fluent -REL Chinese, 2nd can Question
 “He can speak fluent Chinese, can you?”
- b. 能 / 我也能
 néng / wǒ yě néng
 can / 1st also can
 “(Yes, I) can.” or “(Yes) I can too.”
- c. *能他说流利的中文
 néng tā shuō liúli -de zhōngwén
 can 3rd speak fluent -REL Chinese

Other Chinese auxiliaries include *nénggòu* 能够 “can,” *kéyǐ* 可以 “permission,” *gǎn* 敢 “dare,” *kěn* 肯 “be willing,” *huì* 会 “will/know how,” etc. Li and Thompson (1981) argue that some of the modal meanings are frequently expressed by adverbs like *yīdìng* 一定 “must” such as the one in (7.9d) that does not allow the A-not-A question type, **yīdìng-bu-yīdìng* in (7.9c), whereas all the auxiliaries should be able to do so grammatically as is exemplified in

(7.9). An auxiliary normally occurs after an adverb such as the sentence in (7.9e).

- (7.9) a. 我能不能去?
 wǒ néng-bu-néng qù
 1st can-NEG-can go
 “Can I go?”
- b. 我可以不可以去?
 wǒ kěyǐ-bu-kěyǐ qù
 1st may-NEG-may go
 “May I go?”
- c. *我一定不一定去
 wǒ yīdìng-bu-yīdìng qù
 1st must-NEG-must go
- d. 我一定去
 wǒ yīdìng qù
 1st must go
 “I must go.”
- e. 我一定会去
 wǒ yīdìng huì qù
 1st must will go
 “I definitely will go.”

Chinese phrases with prepositions typically occur in front of the verb of a clause marking an optional part of a verb phrase, as a clause can be grammatically correct without it (7.10a). Therefore, prepositions function to mark the relationship between the predicate of a clause and participants of an event in addition to the subcategorized arguments. As they are not subcategorized by the verb in the lexicon, phrases with prepositions in the preverbal position are thus also known as adjuncts, optional participants of an event needed in communication in accordance with the judgment of a speaker. For example, the preposition *zài* 在 “at” in (7.10b) marks the noun *jiā* 家 “home” as a locative phrase indicating the place where the event of *watching movies* actually happened.

- (7.10) a. 他昨天看了两个电影
 tā zuótiān kàn -le liǎng-ge diàn -yǐng
 3rd yesterday see -le two-CL electric -shadow
 “He watched two movies yesterday.”
- a. 他昨天在家看了两个电影
 tā zuótiān zài jiā kàn -le liǎng-ge diàn -yǐng
 3rd yesterday at home see -le two-CL electric -shadow
 “He watched two movies at home yesterday.”
- c. 他在不在家?
 tā zài-bu-zài jiā
 3rd at-NEG-at home
 “Is he at home?”
- d. 他在学校
 tā zài xué -xiào
 3rd be-at learn -school
 “He is at school.”
- e. 他在不在家看电影?
 tā zài-bu-zài jiā kàn diàn -yǐng
 3rd at-NEG-at home see electric -shadow
 “Is he watching movies at home?”

It is necessary to note that nearly all of the so-called prepositions in Chinese can function as full-fledged verbs as well. For example, in (7.10c and d) *zài* functions as the verb. Just like any other verb, *zài* is able to serve as an element in forming an A-not-A question (more about A-not-A questions later in section 7.7.1). Such a verbal property is retained even if the word evolves into a preposition-like element such as in (7.10e). For this reason, Li and Thompson (1981) also identify the so-called prepositions in Chinese as coverbs, a linguistic form that behaves not completely like a verb, yet not completely like an English preposition, such as *with*, *at*, *in*, and *on*, that is totally distinct from any English verb.

Other Chinese prepositions in the adjunct position that resemble the locative *zài* include the comparative *bǐ* 比 “than” in (7.11a), the source marker *cóng* 从 “from” in (7.11b), the directive *dùì* 对 “toward” in (7.11c), the comitative *gēn* 跟 “with (someone)” in (7.11d), the ablative *lí* 离 “apart from” in (7.11e), the

benefactive *ì* 替 “for (someone)” in (7.11f), the instrumental *yòng* 用 “with (something)” in (7.11g), and so on and so forth.

- (7.11) a. 他比我高
 tā bǐ wǒ gāo
 3rd than 1st tall
 “He is taller than me.”
- b. 他从英国来
 tā cóng yīngguó lái
 3rd from England come
 “He comes from England.”
- c. 他对我说中文
 tā duì wǒ shuō zhōngwén
 3rd toward 1st speak Chinese
 “He speaks Chinese to me.”
- d. 我跟你去中国
 wǒ gēn nǐ qù zhōngguó
 1st with 2nd go China
 “I’ll go to China with you.”
- e. 中国离日本很近
 zhōngguó lí rìběn hěn jìn
 China from Japan very near
 “China is very near Japan.”
- f. 我替他工作
 wǒ tì tā gōngzuò
 1st for 3rd work
 “I work for him.”
- g. 他们用煤气炉子做饭
 tā-men yòng méi-qì lú -zi zuò fàn
 3rd-PL use coal-air stove -SUF make rice
 “They cooked their meals with a gas stove.”

7.3 Constituency

To gain a precise understanding of Chinese syntax, it is necessary to study the hierarchical nature of different parts of a sentence. A Chinese clause is not

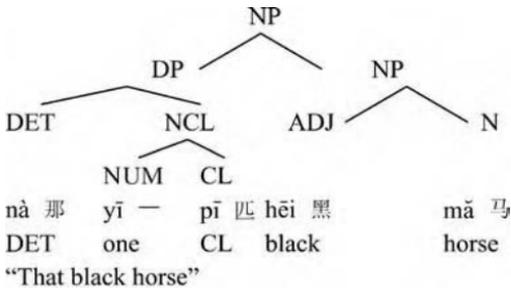
made up only of bare nouns and bare verbs, as other constituents frequently modify them, forming a category larger than the lexical categories covered in sections 7.1 and 7.2. For example in (7.2) it is shown that nouns like *mǎ* “horse” can be modified by adjectives like *hēi* “black” or *bái* “white” and fill up an argument position together. This larger unit of noun and adjective is commonly called a noun phrase with the noun *mǎ* functioning as the head and the adjectives functioning as the modifiers. In other words, for a simple noun phrase like *hēi mǎ* “black horse,” there are two levels in which two smaller constituents, an adjective and a noun, together construct a Chinese noun phrase (NP). The rule in (7.12b) is a phrase-structure rule stipulating the word order of the constituents of a Chinese noun phrase. Furthermore, the bracket around ADJ in (7.12b) describes the fact that an adjective such as *hēi* “black” in (7.12a) is an optional constituent within the noun phrase. It is perfectly correct to simply say *mǎ pǎo-le* 马跑了 “The horse has run (away),” in which a bare noun *mǎ* assumes the argument position without an adjective for the one-place predicate *pǎo* “to run” in (7.15a).

- (7.12) a.
- | | |
|-------|-------|
| NP | |
| ADJ | N |
| hēi 黑 | mǎ 马 |
| black | horse |
- b. NP → (DP) (ADJ) N
 c. DP → DET (NCL)
 d. DP → NCL
 e. NCL → (numeral) CL

As the example in (7.14) demonstrates, an NP can be a bare noun and all the constituents in front of the head noun are optional. Furthermore, within the category DP, the NCL, composed of a numeral and a classifier, is not obligatory either as it is correct to say *nà mǎ* “that horse” without the NCL. Within the current framework, the category DET has only two members, i.e., the two demonstratives *zhè* 这 “this” and *nà* 那 “that.” Within the NCL, the category *numeral* is optional as it is also perfectly correct to say *nà pī mǎ* “that horse” with just the classifier (CL). Nevertheless, the NP rules in (7.12) also predict that the string **nà yī mǎ* is ungrammatical because the category

CL, standing for classifiers, is an obligatory constituent of the NCL phrase, even though DP is an optional category at a certain level of an NP. Finally, a Chinese NP can be realized with both DET and NCL (7.12c) or simply just the NCL (7.12d), as it is also possible to say just the string *mǎi pī mǎ* 买匹马 buy CL horse “buy a horse” without a demonstrative.

(7.13)



Moreover, Sproat and Shih (1991) observe that adjectives of different kinds modifying a noun directly without a relative marker *de* follow a certain order in standard Chinese that is specifically marked in the lexicon. Adjectives indicating quality and size must precede adjectives relating to shape, and adjectives relating to shape must precede adjectives indicating color.

- (7.14) a. SIZE → COLOR → NOUN
 大黑马 *黑大马
 dà hēi mǎ hēi dà mǎ
 big black horse black big horse
 “a big, black horse”
- b. SIZE → SHAPE → NOUN
 小方桌 *方小桌
 xiǎo fāng zhuō fāng xiǎo zhuō
 small square table square small table
 “a small, square table”
- c. QUALITY → SIZE → NOUN
 好大妈 *大好妈
 hǎo dà mā dà hǎo mā
 good big Mom big good Mom
 “good aunt”

- d. 黑的大的马
 hēi de dà de mǎ
 black REL big REL horse
 “a horse that is black and big”

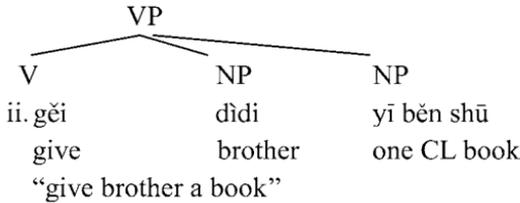
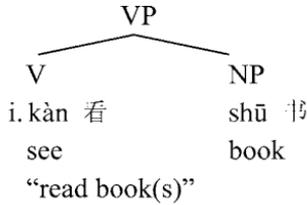
The example in (7.14d) shows that such a word-order restriction does not apply once the adjectives are marked by the relative marker indicating that the noun *mǎ* “horse” is modified by two adjectival phrases.

- (7.15) a. 
- b. $S \rightarrow (NP) VP$

The phrase structure rule in (7.15b) describes the constituent structure of a Chinese *S* (a clause) which allows an optional NP in its initial position. The bracket around the initial NP demonstrates that the argument position before a verb is optional in Chinese. An English *S* obligatorily requires the argument position before a verb to be filled by an NP as it is unacceptable for an *S* to have the argument position there unfilled, such as “*left” existing as a complete sentence. A grammatical English sentence should be something like *He left*. In contrast, it is perfectly acceptable to say *pǎo-le* “(He) left” in Chinese, as long as the context is clear. For this reason, Li and Thompson (1981) claim that Chinese is a topic-prominent language, whereas English is a subject-prominent language.

The constituent structure of the Chinese verb phrase (VP) can then be described in (7.16), in which different VPs are needed on account of different subcategorization frames for various verbs. For verbs like *pǎo* “to run” which is subcategorized for one argument (V_i), the phrase-structure rule in (7.16b) does not allow them to be followed by an additional NP. For transitive verbs (V_i) like *kàn* 看 “to see”, the phrase-structure rule in (7.16c) allows them to have one following NP. But for ditransitive verbs (V_{dt}) like *gěi* 给 “to give” that are subcategorized for three arguments, the phrase structure rule in (7.16d) permits them to be followed by two NPs.

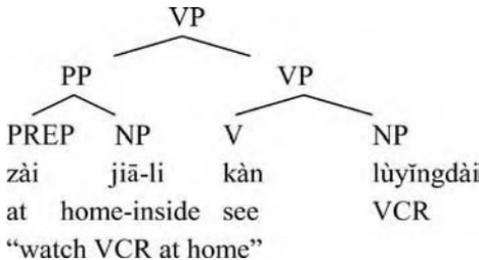
(7.16) a.



- b. VP → V_i
- c. VP → V_t NP
- d. VP → V_{dt} NP NP

It was noted in the above discussion that a Chinese phrase with a preposition typically occurs in front of a verb. Therefore, the phrase structure rule in (7.16b) for a Chinese VP should then be expanded to (7.17a) to account for the adjunct position for the Chinese PPs (prepositional phrases). The constituent structure of a PP is then composed of a preposition and a noun phrase.

- (7.17) a. VP → (PP) VP
- b. PP → PREP NP
- c.



The rule in (7.18a) describes the syntactic position of Chinese auxiliaries noted as typically occurring in front of a verb.

- (7.18) a. $VP \rightarrow AUX VP$
 b.
-
- AUX
 néng 能
 can
- VP
 qù 去
 go
- “(One) can go.”

The phrase structure rule in (7.19a) describes the preverbal position for Chinese adverbs.

- (7.19) a. $VP \rightarrow ADV (AUX) VP$
 b.
-
- ADV
 jīngcháng 经常
 often
- VP
 AUX
 kěyǐ 可以
 may
- VP
 V
 kàn 看
 see
- NP
 diànyǐng 电影
 movies
- “(One) can often see movies.”

In summary, phrase-structure rules are modeled after a language user’s knowledge of how to generate grammatically correct sentences in accordance with the categorical information listed in the lexicon. The same rules can be used again and again to produce an infinite number of sentences in a language.

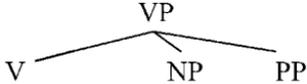
Furthermore, a sequence of identical words can be said to be structurally ambiguous when Chinese phrase-structure rules allow more than one reading. For example, the sequence *yào chǎo fàn* 要炒饭 “want fry rice” can be analyzed in two ways: if $NP[chǎo-fàn]_{NP}$ is treated as an NP, then the sequence means *to want fried-rice*. If the same string of sounds $VP[chǎo NP[fàn]_{NP}]_{VP}$ is analyzed as a VP with the constituent structure V NP, the meaning of the sequence is changed to, *to want to fry rice*.

Some verbs of displacement can be subcategorized for a following prepositional phrase. For example, in (7.20b) there is a postverbal, locative PP *zài zhuō-shàng*. Note that unlike the preverbal PPs that are mostly optional, PPs in this position are obligatory as **fàng běn shū* 放本书 without a postverbal PP

does not make sense. Therefore, it is necessary to have still another rule for the Chinese VP as is given in (7.20a).

(7.20) a. $VP \rightarrow V (NP) PP$

b.



fāng 放 běn shū 本书 zài zhuō-shàng 在桌上
 place CL book on table
 “place a book on the table”

7.4 Selectional restrictions

In the process of producing grammatical sentences, other than the subcategorization frames in the lexicon and phrase structure rules, words are subject to different selectional restrictions based upon their semantic compatibility. A good example of this fact might be the co-occurrence constraints existing between various Chinese classifiers and the nouns that they modify. In counting, all concrete nouns in standard Chinese must be used with a numeral-classifier construction. The structure is comparable to the English mass noun *water* that is normally paired with a counter such as *a drop of water* or *a glass of water*. Similarly, Chinese nouns are restricted to a number of classifiers depending on their semantic compatibility, i.e., the size and shape between the entity denoted by a given noun and semantics of a classifier must agree. For example, in (7.21) 只 *zhī* as a classifier denotes a round-shape thing, 条 *tiáo* is used for a rope-like thing, and 本 *běn* for a book-like thing, etc. Perhaps the untoned *ge* 个, as the most commonly used classifier, is somewhat exceptional in that it no longer carries a clear sense of shape other than functioning as a counter. Otherwise, semantically incompatible classifiers and nouns cannot go together, such as: *三本球 *sān běn qiú*, *四只蛇, *sì zhī shé* *五条书 *wǔ běn shū*, in which there is a semantic clash between the classifier and the noun.

(7.21)

一个西瓜	两个人	三只球	四条蛇	五本书
yī-ge xī-guā	liǎng ge rén	sān zhī qiú	sì tiáo shé	wǔ běn shū
a-CL west-melon	2-CL human	3-CL ball	4-CL snake	5-CL book
“a water-melon”	“two people”	“three balls”	“four snakes”	“five books”

Most commonly used classifiers, probably because of their fundamental sensitivity to the size and shape of the entities they modify, can be modified by adjectives such as *dà* “big” and *xiǎo* “small” for emphasis like in (7.22) when the numeral is one.

- (7.22) 一大个西瓜 一小本书 一大块煎饼
 yí-dà-ge xī-guā yì-xiǎo-běn shū yí-dà-kuài jiān-bǐng
 1-big-CL west-melon 1-small-CL book 1-big-CL fry-cake
 “a big water-melon” “a small book” “a big pancake”

Otherwise, the most common position for adjectives is to follow the classifiers like those in (7.23).

- (7.23)
 几个大西瓜 三本小书 六块大煎饼
 jǐ-ge dà xī-guā sān-běn xiǎo shū liù-kuài dà jiān-bǐng
 several-CL big west-melon 3-CL small book 6-CL big fry-cake
 “several big water melons” “three small books” “six big pancakes”

The numeral-classifier construction and the plural *xiē* 些 “several” that is insensitive to size and shape are generally in complementary distribution and cannot co-occur, as is exemplified in (7.24).

- (7.24) 买些鱼/书 买几条鱼 *买些条鱼
 mǎi xiē yú/shū mǎi jǐ-tiáo yú mǎi xiē-tiáo yú
 buy some fish/book buy several-CL fish buy several-CL fish
 “buy some fish/ books” “buy several fish”

Still another good example of semantic incompatibility may be the restriction between a Chinese preposition and its following noun. It was noted in chapter 4 that certain prepositions such as the locative marker *zài* 在 and the source marker *cóng* 从 require a location-denoting noun to follow them, as is exemplified by the data in (7.25). For a non-spatial noun, an additional locative particle is needed to change it into a location-denoting one, thus

satisfying the selectional restriction that is defined as a specificity condition in chapter 4.

- (7.25) a. *他从报纸看到这条新闻
 tā cóng bàozhǐ kàn-dào zhè tiáo xīn-wén
 3rd from newspaper-up see-arrive DEM CL new-hear
- b. 他从报纸上看到这条新闻
 tā cóng bàozhǐ-shàng kàn-dào zhè tiáo xīn-wén
 3rd from newspaper-up see-arrive DEM CL new-hear
 “He read the news from the newspaper.”

7.5 Chinese pronouns and demonstratives

Chinese pronouns and demonstratives share some common features, although they have distinctively different grammatical functions. They are discussed together here because they both can be used to represent a noun phrase.

There are two first-person pronouns including the singular *wǒ* 我 and a colloquial inclusive pronoun *zán* 咱 (meaning *you* and *I* together), both of which can be marked by the suffix *-men* 们 signaling plurality. When the inclusive first-person pronoun is marked by the plural marker, such as 咱们, it is pronounced as *zá-men*.

There are two second-person pronouns, the regular one *nǐ* 你 and the polite form *nín* 您. However, only the regular second-person pronoun can take the plural marker *-men*.

The most common third-person pronoun is *tā* written differently covarying with factors in gender and animacy, such as 他 “third-person, male,” 她 “third-person, female,” 它 “third-person non-human (including inanimate).” However, in natural speech they are not used as much as their counterparts in English. Chinese speakers tend to repeat the name of an entity rather than use a third-person pronoun. Overuse of pronouns tends to be a common, undesirable feature characteristic of compositions written by beginning Chinese-language students. Furthermore, it is extremely uncommon to use a third-person pronoun to refer to a non-human entity. The default manner in referring to such an entity is either to repeat the noun representing it or to

add a Chinese determiner (or demonstrative), such as *nà* “that” or *zhè* “this.” Thus, *nà māo* 那猫 refers to “that cat” or *zhè māo* 这猫 refers to “this cat.” (那 can also be written as 哪.) The two demonstratives *nà* “that” and *zhè* “this” have colloquial counterparts realized as *nèi* for “that” and *zhèi* for “this,” or the rhotacized forms, *zhèr* 这儿 and *nàr* 那儿.

The third-person pronoun *tā* can be followed by the plural marker *-men* 们. Therefore, 他们 *tā-men* indicates plural male human, 她们 *tā-men* indicates plural female human, and 它们 *tā-men* indicates plural non-human. The plural marker for the Chinese demonstratives are *-xiē* 些, thus, *nà-xiē* 那些 “those” and *zhè-xiē* 这些 “these,” or the more colloquial *nèi-xiē* 那些 “those” and *zhèi-xiē* 这些 “these.” However, the rules governing pronouns and demonstratives are not the same. In (7.12b and c) it was stipulated that the rules for a DP are, first of all, NP → (DP) (ADJ) N and then, DP → DET (NCL). That is, as *nà* “that” and *zhè* “this” are the only members of the category DET, it can precede a noun (7.26a), an adjective (7.26b), and a classifier (7.26c).

- (7.26) a. 那人走了
nà rén zǒu le
 DEM person walk CRS
 “That person left.”
- b. 那好人走了
nà hǎo rén zǒu le
 DEM good person walk CRS
 “That good person left.”
- c. 那个好人走了
nà ge hǎo rén zǒu le
 DEM CL good person walk CRS
 “That good person left.”

However, Chinese pronouns normally cannot assume the head position of an NP with a modifier such as the NP in (7.27c), although a pronoun can stand for the entire NP such as in example (7.27b) where the pronoun *tā* can be interpreted as standing for the entire NP *jiějie de péngyǒu* “sister’s friend.” Furthermore, a pronoun can be used as a modifier of a noun such as the example in (7.27d).

- (7.27) a. 找姐姐的朋友
 zhǎo jiějie de péngyǒu
 find sister REL friend
 “find your sister’s friend”
- b. 找他
 zhǎo tā
 find 3rd
 “find him”
- c. *找姐姐的他
 zhǎo jiějie de tā
 find sister REL 3rd
- d. 找他朋友
 zhǎo tā péngyǒu
 find 3rd friend
 “find his friend”

In light of the data in (7.27), additional NP rules in (7.28a and b) are necessary to properly account for the syntactic distribution of the Chinese pronouns, represented by PRO.

- (7.28) a. NP → PRO
 b. NP → PRO N
 c. NP → DET

The NP rule in (7.28c) is needed to account for the fact that the determiner can stand for an entire noun phrase similar to the pronoun such as those in (7.29).

- (7.29) a. 我就要这些
 wǒ jiù yào zhèi-xiē
 1st only want DEM-PL
 “I want only these.”
- b. 我就要这
 wǒ jiù yào zhèi
 1st only want DEM
 “I want only this.”

There is only one Chinese reflexive pronoun *zìjǐ* 自己. A reflexive pronoun normally requires its antecedent to exist within the sentence in which it occurs. Like the other pronouns discussed above, it can occur alone representing the entire NP such as the one in (7.30a) or take up a modifier position in front of a noun such as the one in (7.30b). However, unlike the other pronouns, the Chinese reflexive pronoun can occur immediately after a regular pronoun to emphasize the reflexive demonstrated by those in (7.30c and d).

- (7.30) a. 她打自己
 tā dǎ zìjǐ
 3rd hit self
 “She hit herself.”
- b. 他打自己脑袋
 tā dǎ zìjǐ nǎo-dài
 3rd hit self brain-pocket
 “He hit his own head.”
- c. 她自己打自己
 tā zìjǐ dǎ zìjǐ
 3rd self hit self
 “*She* hit herself.”
- d. 他打他自己
 tā dǎ tā zìjǐ
 3rd hit tā self
 “*He* hit himself.”

The reciprocal element comparable to the English reciprocal pronoun *each other* is *bǐcǐ* 彼此. *Bǐcǐ* 彼此 are two morphemes that are demonstratives in classical Chinese and occur most frequently in the adverb position such as in example (7.31). A similar adverb *hùxiāng* 互相 “mutually” can easily replace the reciprocal adverb *bǐcǐ* 彼此.

- (7.31) 他们彼此尊重(对方)
 tā-men bi-ci zūnzhòng (duì-fāng)
 3rd-PL that-this respect (face-side)
 “*They* respect each other.”

7.6 Negation

There are four semantically distinctive Chinese negators: *bù* 不, *bié* 别, *méi* 没, and *méi(yǒu)* 没有. *Bù* is the most commonly used, as it can be placed in front of an adverb as in (7.32a), an auxiliary as in (7.32b), a preposition as in (7.32c), or a verb as in (7.32d), depending on what the speaker wants to negate. Note that in (7.32c) the PP falls into the scope of negation, whereas the PP in (7.32d) does not. Other uses of the negator *bù* to form the Chinese interrogative will be discussed in section 7.7.

- (7.32) a. 我不一定来
 wǒ bù yíding lái
 1st NEG certainly come
 “I am not certain that I would come.”
- b. 我不能来
 wǒ bù néng lái
 1st NEG can come
 “I cannot come.”
- c. 他不在图书馆看书, 他在那里工作
 tā bú zài túshūguǎn kàn shū, tā nàlǐ gōngzuò
 3rd NEG at library see book, 3rd at there work
 “He is not reading in the library but is working there.”
- d. 他在家不看书, 只看电视
 tā zài jiā bú kàn shū, zhǐ kàn diàn-shì
 3rd at home NEG see book, only see electric-view
 “At home, he does not read but only watches TV.”

Furthermore, only *bù* can be used when the speaker wants to negate a habitual situation such as the one in (7.32d), an ongoing situation such as the one in (7.32c), an intention such as the one in (7.32b), or a future event such as the one in (7.32a). To negate a completed event, the negator *méi(yǒu)* must be used instead such as those in (7.33).

- (7.33) a. 他昨天不来
 tā zuótiān bù lái
 3rd yesterday NEG come
 “He did not (plan) to come.” “*He did not come yesterday.”

- b. 他昨天没来
 tā zuótiān bù lái
 3rd yesterday NEG come
 “He did not come yesterday.”

The negator *méiyǒu* can be used without *yǒu* as is exemplified in example (7.33b). Furthermore, the negator for existential sentences such as the one in (7.34b and d) may look exactly the same as the negator for completed events in (7.33), although *méiyǒu* normally cannot be shortened to *méi* like those in (7.33) if *yǒu* functions as the predicate of an existential sentence such as the one in (7.34e).

- (7.34) a. 树上长着很多苹果
 shù-shàng zhǎng-zhe hěn-duō píngguǒ
 tree-up grow-IMP very-more apple
 “Many apples grow on the tree.”
- b. 树上没长着很多苹果
 shù-shàng méi zhǎng-zhe hěn-duō píngguǒ
 tree -up NEG grow-IMP very-more apple
 “Many apples grow on the tree.”
- c. 我有很多书
 wǒ yǒu hěn-duō shū
 1st have very-more book
 “I have many books.”
- d. 我没有很多书
 wǒ méi yǒu hěn-duō shū
 1st NEG have very-more book
 “I do not have many books.”
- e. *我没很多书
 wǒ méi hěn-duō shū
 1st NEG very-more book

Finally, the negator *bié* is primarily used in unrealized situations such as the negative command in (7.35a) or the negative request in (7.35b).

- (7.35) a. 你别听收音机!
 nǐ bié tīng shōu -yīn -jī
 2nd NEG listen receive -sound -machine
 “You do not listen to the radio!”
- b. 请你别说话?
 qǐng nǐ bié shuō huà
 please you NEG say word
 “Please would you not speak?”

7.7 Sentence types

There are three major sentence types in Chinese: the declarative, the interrogative, and the imperative. The discussion on Chinese syntax has been mostly about the declarative which is characterized by a string of words regulated by the phrase structure rule $S \rightarrow (NP) VP$. In natural discourse, the declarative occurs much more frequently than the other two types and, therefore, constitutes the most important basis for the syntactic study of a language. As all of the clauses discussed so far were declarative, I assume that we all have now gained a fairly good knowledge of this sentence type and so I will not elaborate on this sentence type further.

7.7.1 Interrogative

The interrogative is generally characterized as a way to request information from listeners. There are four main types of interrogatives, plus a derived tag-question type, in Chinese: the *wh*-word question, the disjunctive question, the A-not-A question, and the particle question. The *wh*-question type refers to questions marked by words like *what*, *where*, *which*, *how*, *who* in which the letters *wh* are used. To form a *wh*-question in Chinese, a speaker only needs to replace the constituent that is in question with a *wh*-word, such as *shénme* 什么 “what,” *shéi*, or *shuí*, 谁 “who,” *zěnyang* (yang) 怎么 (样) “how,” *wèishénme* 为什么 or *gànmá* 干吗 “why,” *duōshǎo* 多少 “how much/many,” *jǐ-CL* 几-CL “how many,” *něi-xiē* 那些 “which ones,” *něi-CL* “which one,” and *nǎr* 哪儿 or *nǎlǐ* 那里 “where.” The *wh*-word *shénme* 什么 “what” can take up either the entire NP position (7.36a) or the modifier position of a NP (7.36b and c).

- (7.36) a. 你说什么?
 nǐ shuō shénme
 2nd speak what
 “What did you say?”
- b. 你说什么话?
 nǐ shuō shénme huà
 2nd speak what word
 “What language do you speak?” or “What words do you say?”
- c. 什么东西这么好吃?
 shénme dōngxī zhème hǎochī
 what thing this good-eat
 “What stuff is so tasty?”

In like manner, *shéi*, or *shuí*, 谁 “who” can do the same thing in (7.37).

- (7.37) a. 你说谁
 nǐ shuō shéi
 2nd speak who
 “Who did you say?”
- b. 谁说你呢?
 shéi shuō nǐ ne
 who speak 2nd Prt
 “Who is talking about you?”
- c. 谁家有游泳池
 shéi jiā yǒu yóuyǒng-chí
 who home has swim-pool
 “Whose home has a swimming pool?”

The wh-words, *zěnyang*(*yang*) 怎么(样) “how,” *wèishénme* 为什么 and *gànmá* 干吗 “why,” function to ask questions in relation to either an S (7.38a) or a VP, as exemplified in (7.38).

- (7.38) a. 他怎么样了?
 tā zěnyang le
 3rd how CRS
 “How is he?”

- b. 他没有车, 怎么去?
 tā méiyǒu chē, zěnmē qù
 3rd NEG car, how go
 “He does not have a car. How can (he) go?”
- c. 你干吗去?
 nǐ gànma qù
 2nd why go
 “Why did you go?”
- d. 你干什么去?(干什么 = 为什么)
 nǐ gànshénme qù
 2nd why go
 “Why did you go?”
- e. 你为什么不听话?
 nǐ wèishénme bù tīng huà
 2nd why NEG hear word
 “Why did you not listen?”

Chinese wh-word *duōshǎo* 多少 “how much/many” is used to ask questions about quantity. As, with the exception of the classifier *xiē* marking plurality, there is no mass/count distinction among Chinese non-human nouns, *duōshǎo* 多少 can occur in front of a noun meaning either “how much” (7.39a) or “how many” (7.39b). *Duōshǎo* also functions as something like a pronoun without a definite number to answer a question with *duōshǎo* such as the one in (7.39c). *Duō* is also used as a degree adverb that can occur directly in front of a monosyllabic adjective to make it into an emphatic nominal such as the one in (7.39d). Similar examples include *duō-huài* 多坏 “so bad,” *duō-gāo* 多高 “so tall,” and *duō-nán* 多难 “so difficult.”

- (7.39) a. 你们有多少钱?
 nǐ-men yǒu duō-shǎo qián
 2nd-PL have more-less money
 “How much money do you have?”
- b. 你们有多少人?
 nǐ-men yǒu duō-shǎo rén
 2nd-PL have more-less person
 “How many people do you have?”

- c. 你们要多少, 我们给多少。
 nǐ-men yào duō-shǎo, wǒmen gěi duō-shǎo
 2nd-PL want more-less, 1st-PL give more-less
 “We will pay any amount that you ask for.”
- d. 这样有多好啊。
 zhèyàng yǒu duō-hǎo a
 DEM have more-good PRT
 “This is so good.”
- e. 你父亲今年有多大?
 nǐ fù-qīn jīn-nián yǒu duō-dà
 2nd father to-year have more big
 “How old is your father this year?”

However, if the number is small and can be easily counted, then *jǐ-CL* 几-CL (7.40a) “how many” is more likely to be used.

- (7.40) a. 你孩子今年有几岁?
 nǐ hái-zi jīn-nián yǒu jǐ suì
 2nd child to-year have several CL
 “How old is your child?”
- b. 你现在有几个孩子?
 nǐ xiàn-zài yǒu jǐ ge hái-zi
 2nd now-at have several CL child
 “How many children do you have now?”

Wh-words like *něi-xiē* 哪些 “which ones,” *něi-CL* 哪个 “which one,” *nǎr* 哪儿 and *nǎli* 哪里 “where” are all variants of the demonstrative *nà* 那/哪 and can be used as question words in the data in (7.41).

- (7.41) a. 哪些人想跳舞?
 něi -xiē rén xiǎng tiào wǔ
 DEM-PL person want jump dance
 “Which of these people want to dance?”
- b. 哪个人想跳舞?
 něi -xiē rén xiǎng tiào wǔ
 DEM-CL person want jump dance
 “Which person wants to dance?”

- c. 哪个想跳舞?
 nǐ -ge xiǎng tiào wǔ
 DEM-CL want jump dance
 “Which person wants to dance?”
- d. 哪儿/里有花卖?
 nǎ-r/lǐ yǒu huā mài
 DEM have flower sell
 “Where are flowers sold?”
- e. 你去哪儿/里?
 nǐ qù nǎ-r/lǐ
 2nd go DEM
 “Where are you going?”

Disjunctive questions present a respondent with a couple of options to choose from when answering them. In Chinese this type of question is marked by the connector *háishì* 还是 “or” as revealed by the data given in (7.42). The phrasing options for this question include: two VPs, a positive one and a negative one such as the one in (7.42a), or two VPs with different nouns along with a repeated shared verb such as the one (7.42b). In (7.42c) the disjunctive parts are the nouns in front of the verb. The alternative can also be the temporal adverbs, such as the one in (7.42d), or PPs, such as the one in (7.42e).

- (7.42) a. 你去还是不去?
 nǐ qù háishì bú qù
 2nd go or NEG go
 “Are you going or not?”
- b. 你坐船还是坐火车?
 nǐ zuò chuán háishì zuò huǒ-chē
 2nd sit ship or sit fire-car
 “Would you go by ship or by boat?”
- c. 今天张老师教还是李老师教?
 jīn-tiān zhāng lǎoshī jiāo háishì lǐ lǎoshī jiāo
 to-day Name teacher teach or Name teacher teach
 “Is Mr. Zhang teaching today or is Mr. Li teaching today?”

- d. 老张今天到还是明天到?
 lǎo zhāng jīn-tiān dào háishì míng-tiān dào
 old Name to-day arrive or bright-sky arrive
 “Does Mr. Zhang arrive today or tomorrow?”
- e. 你在这儿睡还是在那儿睡?
 nǐ zài zhè-r shuì háishì zài nà-r shuì
 2nd at DEM sleep or at DEM sleep
 “Are you sleeping here or there?”

A particle question is formed by adding a sentence-final question particle like *ma* 吗 to an otherwise declarative sentence such as those in (7.43). (For other possible particles, please refer to section 4.1.1.)

- (7.43) a. 我该去吗?
 wǒ gāi qù ma
 1st should go PRT
 “Should I go?”
- b. 你吃过饭了吗?
 nǐ chī -guò fàn le ma
 2nd eat-EXP rice CRS prt
 “Have you eaten yet?”
- c. 你买菜吗?
 nǐ mǎi cài ma
 2nd buy vegetable PRT
 “Are you buying a vegetable?”

Particle questions are somewhat equivalent to English yes/no questions such as the translations given in (7.43). However, in answering the Chinese yes/no question, one usually does not answer with the English equivalent of a yes, *duì* 对 or *shì* 是. For a positive short answer, one can simply repeat the verb or the auxiliary verb. So for (7.43a) an appropriate short answer is simply *gāi* “should.” For a more complete answer, one can repeat either just the verb phrase, *gāi qù* “should go” or the entire S with some adjustment with the pronoun, *nǐ gāi qù* “you should go.” So for (7.43c), any of the following answers are appropriate: *mǎi* “buy,” *mǎi cài* “buy vegetable,” or

wǒ mǎi cài “I am buying a vegetable.” For a negative answer, one can add the negative *bù* to the above, such as *bù mǎi*, *bù mǎi cài*, or *wǒ bù mǎi cài*.

The so-called A-not-A question, which is functionally equivalent to the particle question, is formed by adding the negator *bù* and repeating the verb such as those in (7.44–7.46). However, the A-not-A question has a more elaborate system in formation. For example, in (7.44) the negator is added after the verb phrase *chī yú* “eat fish” as is exemplified by (7.44a). Nevertheless, it is possible to repeat the verb without repeating the patient argument *yú* “fish” such as in (7.44b). Finally, the most elliptical A-not-A is simply to insert a negator *bù* without repeating the VP such as (7.44c).

- (7.44) a. 他吃鱼不吃鱼?
 tā chī yú bu chī yú
 3rd eat fish NEG eat fish
 “Does he eat fish?”
- b. 他吃不吃鱼?
 tā chī bu chī yú
 3rd eat NEG eat fish
 “Does he eat fish?”
- c. 他吃鱼不?
 tā chī yú bù
 3rd eat fish NEG
 “Does he eat fish?”

The data in (7.45) show how the A-not-A question type works with an auxiliary verb. The sentence in (7.45b) shows that a yes/no question can be formed with the A-not-A pattern by adding a negator and repeating the following VP. Despite this, it is not possible to repeat the verb only with an auxiliary because this pattern is grammatically incorrect as demonstrated by (7.45c). An A-not-A question can also be formed with only a negator for a VP with an auxiliary such as the one in (7.45d). Finally, one can also repeat the entire VP with the auxiliary to form an A-not-A question such as the one in (7.45e).

- (7.45) a. 他能吃鱼吗?
 tā néng chī yú ma
 3rd can eat fish PRT
 “Can he eat fish?”
- b. 他能不能吃鱼?
 tā néng bu néng chī yú
 3rd can NEG can eat fish
 “Can he eat fish?”
- c. *他能吃不吃鱼?
 tā néng chī bu chī yú
 3rd can eat NEG eat fish
- d. 他能吃鱼不?
 tā néng chī yú bù
 3rd can eat fish NEG
 “Can he eat fish?”
- e. 他能吃鱼不能吃鱼?
 tā néng chī yú bu néng chī yú
 3rd can eat fish NEG can eat fish
 “Can he eat fish?”

In forming an A-not-A question with disyllabic verbs, one can repeat the entire VP such as in (7.46a), repeat the verb in (7.46b), repeat the first syllable of the verb like (7.46c), or simply add the negator without repetition of the VP like (7.46d).

- (7.46) a. 你喜欢英国不喜欢英国?
 nǐ xǐhuān yīngguó bu xǐhuān yīngguó
 2nd like England NEG like England
 “Do you like England?”
- b. 你喜欢不喜欢英国?
 nǐ xǐhuān bu xǐhuān yīngguó
 2nd like NEG like England
 “Do you like England?”

- c. 你喜不喜欢英国?
 nǐ xǐ-bu-xǐhuān yīngguó
 2nd like NEG like England
 “Do you like England?”
- d. 你喜欢英国不?
 nǐ xǐhuān yīngguó bù
 2nd like England NEG
 “Do you like England?”

Furthermore, the A-not-A question type is not limited only to the verb phrases. It is also possible to form yes/no questions for PPs with the similar A-not-A patterns such as those in (7.47a–c). Additional examples of A-not-A questions are given in (7.47d) for a PP with an instrumental case and in (7.47e) for a PP with a benefactive case.

- (7.47) a. 他在中国读书不在中国读书?
 tā zài zhōngguó dúshū bu zài zhōngguó dúshū
 3rd in China study NEG in China study
 “Is he studying in China?”
- b. 他在不在中国读书?
 tā zài bu zài zhōngguó dúshū
 3rd in NEG in China study
 “Is he studying in China?”
- c. 他在中国读书不?
 tā zài zhōngguó dúshū bu
 3rd in China study NEG
 “Is he studying in China?”
- d. 他用不用电脑写中文?
 tā yòng bu yòng diàn-nǎo xiě zhōngwén
 3rd with NEG with electric-pocket write Chinese
 “Does he write Chinese with a computer?”
- e. 你替不替他带点东西?
 nǐ tì bu tì tā dài diǎn dōng-xī
 2nd for NEG for 3rd bring some east-west
 “Are you going to bring him some stuff?”

It is also possible to form an A-not-A question with the negator *méi* for a completed event such as the one in (7.48a) and an existential sentence such as the one in (7.48b).

- (7.48) a. 你看没看过这本书?
 nǐ kàn méi kàn-guò zhè běn shū
 2nd see not see -pass DEM CL book
 “Have you read this book?”
- b. 你有没有人民币?
 nǐ yǒu méi yǒu rén-mín-bì
 2nd have not have people-money
 “Do you have Chinese money?”

But when the negator happens at the end of a sentence, the full form *méiyǒu* must be used as in (7.49).

- (7.49) a. 你看过这本书没有?
 nǐ kàn -guò zhè běn shū méiyǒu
 2nd see -pass DEM CL book not
 “Have you read this book?”
- b. 你有人民币没有?
 nǐ yǒu rén-mín-bì méiyǒu
 2nd have people-money not
 “Do you have Chinese money?”

7.7.2 Imperative

Generally speaking, the imperative refers to a sentence expressing a command. An imperative is most commonly addressed to listeners such as those in (7.50). An imperative sentence frequently does not have a sentence-initial NP which assumes the listener to be the agent of the S. Moreover, when the context is clear, an imperative can also be composed of only an adverbial element such as the one in (7.50d).

- (7.50) a. 你过来!
 nǐ guò lái
 2nd pass come
 “You, come!”

- b. 过来
guò lái
pass come
“Come!”
- c. 快点走
kuài diǎn zǒu
fast point walk
“Move quickly!”
- d. 快点
kuài diǎn
fast point walk
“Move quickly!”

The directness of the imperative can be softened by adding a verbal element like *qǐng* 请 “to invite,” or *máfan* 麻烦 “to trouble” at the beginning of the S such as (7.51). An imperative command can also be softened by a phrase like *yīdiǎn* 一点 “a little bit” or *yīxià* “once” such as in (7.51b).

- (7.51) a. 请快点
qǐng kuài diǎn
invite fast point
“Please be quick.”
- b. 快一点
kuài yīdiǎn
fast a-point
“A bit quicker.”
- c. 请过来
qǐng guò lái
invite pass come
“Please come!”
- d. 麻烦过来一下
máfan guò lái yī-xià
trouble pass come one-down
“Could you come over once?”

An imperative can also take the first person as the agent of the S, such as giving oneself a command as shown by the example in (7.52a). In addition, a

sentence-final particle *ba* 吧 can be added to an imperative to solicit agreement from the listener, thus making it a very gentle command such as in (7.52b).

- (7.52) a. 我去!
wǒ qù
1st go
“(Telling oneself) go!”
- b. 我们一起走吧
wǒ-men yīqǐ zǒu ba
1st-PL together go PRT
“Let us go together.”

8 Chinese syntax 2

Chapter 7 defines lexical categories in terms of linear word order. However, Chinese word order is far from rigid. In this chapter, Chinese nominalization, the relative clause, adverbials, serial-verb constructions, and prepositional phrases will be introduced with reference to the word-order flexibility triggered by various discourse/pragmatic factors. At the end of this chapter, the relationship between the Chinese serial-verb constructions and prepositional phrases will be discussed.

Chinese is said to be a topic-prominent language (Li and Thompson 1981), i.e., sometimes a sentence begins with a nominal representing a topic that refers to something about which a speaker assumes the listener has some knowledge. The rest of the sentence is a description of the topic, commonly known as a comment. For instance, the sentence in (8.1a) has a normal Chinese word order, with the agent in front of the verb and the affected undergoer after the verb. However, the affected undergoer *píngguǒ* “apple” in (8.1b) is fronted to take up the topic position without the need of any morphological change in Chinese. But the selectional restrictions of the words in the sentence do not allow it to be ambiguous. When the selectional restriction allows, the sequence *jī chī le* in (8.1c) has a topic-comment structure and allows a different reading depending on context, either “The chicken has eaten” or “The chicken was eaten.”

- (8.1) a. 我吃苹果
wǒ chī píngguǒ
1st eat apple
“I eat apple.”
- b. 苹果我吃
píngguǒ wǒ chī
apple 1st eat
“Apple, I do eat.”

the placement of a clitic *de* after an otherwise verb phrase, or sentence, such as in (8.3).

- (8.3) a. 看电影 (VP) 看电影的 (NP)
 kàn diàn-yǐng kàn diàn-yǐng de
 see electric-shadow see electric-shadow NOM
 “to see a movie” “those who saw a movie”
- b. 吃 (V) 吃的 (NP)
 chī chī de
 eat eat NOM
 “to eat” “food” or “those who eat”
- c. 你 (PRO) 你的 (NP)
 nǐ nǐ de
 2nd 2nd NOM
 “you” “yours”

Note that the nominalizer *de* can also be placed after a pronoun turning it into a nominal like the English *mine*, *yours*, *his*, *hers* or *theirs* such as the second-person pronoun in (8.3c). Furthermore, Chinese nominalization regularly deletes one of the two arguments for a transitive verb, as is exemplified by (8.3a) *kàn diàn-yǐng de* in which the doer is not specified. Sometimes, both arguments of a transitive verb can be omitted, giving rise to an ambiguous noun phrase, the meaning of which can only be determined by context. For example, *kàn de* in (8.3b) can mean either book(s) or the person(s) who read such as those in (8.4a).

- (8.4) a. 你有看的吗?
 nǐ yǒu kàn de ma
 2nd have look NOM question
 “Do you have (any book) to read?” or “Do you have (anyone who wants) to read?”
- b. 想吃的都走了?
 xiǎng chī de dōu zǒu le
 want eat NOM all walk CRS
 “Those who want to eat have all left!”

8.2 Relative clauses

A relative clause refers to a clause that modifies a noun, which, in turn, is commonly referred to as the head noun of the relative clause. In Chinese, the phrase-structure rule for a relative clause can be rewritten as:

NP → (DP) S *de* (ADJ) N.

Note that the adjective modifying the head noun must be placed right after the relative marker *de* 的 such as the one in (8.5a). Furthermore, the argument in a relative clause that is coreferential with the head noun must be omitted, such as 刚买的马 *gāng mǎi de mǎ* “the horse that was just bought” in (8.5b–d) where the head noun *mǎ* “horse” is coreferential with the undergoer of the verb *mǎi* “to buy” in the relative clause and thus omitted within the clause $_{NP}[S[gāng\ mǎi\]_{NPI}\]_{NPI}\ de]_S[_{NP}[mǎ]_{NPI}]_{NP}$. Although the relative clause, represented by S *de* in the above rule, normally occurs after a DP such as the one in (8.5c), for emphasis it can also occur before the DP *yī-pī* in (8.5d).

- (8.5) a. 你的白马
 nǐ de bái mǎ
 2nd NOM white horse
 “your white horse”
- b. 爸爸刚买的马
 bàba gāng mǎi de mǎ
 father just buy NOM horse
 “the horse that father just bought”
- c. 一匹刚买的马
 yì-pī gāng mǎi de mǎ
 one-CL just buy NOM horse
 “a horse that was just bought”
- d. 刚买的一匹马
 gāng mǎi de yì-pī mǎ
 just buy -NOM one-CL horse
 “a horse that was just bought”

The head nouns of the relative clauses in (8.3) through (8.5) function either as the doer or the undergoer of the verb in the relative clauses. However, the head nouns may explicitly or implicitly also refer to entities situated in the

non-argument position of a relative clause. When it refers to a non-argument explicitly, a pronominal element must be placed after a preposition such as in the examples in (8.6), in which the head nouns *rén* (8.6a) and *túshūguǎn* (8.6b) are coreferential to the benefactive *tā* (8.6a) and the locative *nà-lǐ* (8.6b) respectively.

- (8.6) a. 我替他画画的人
 wǒ tì tā huà huà de rén
 1st for 3rd draw picture NOM person
 “the person, for whom I drew the picture”
- b. 她在那里看书的图书馆
 tā zài nà-lǐ kàn shū de túshūguǎn
 3rd at there see book NOM library
 “the library where she read”

However, the examples in (8.7) show that when a relative clause does not contain a prepositional phrase, the head nouns such as *yuányīn* “reason” (8.7a) and *túshūguǎn/dìfāng* “library” (8.7b) implicitly mean that the head noun is coreferential to a non-argument that is empty in the relative clause. That is, a non-argument such as a locative phrase *zài túshūguǎn* is implied in the relative clause without words represented by the parenthesis [*tā* () *kàn shū*]*de* in (8.7b).

- (8.7) a. 我画画的原因
 wǒ huà huà de yuányīn
 1st draw picture NOM reason
 “the reason that I drew the picture”
- b. 他看书的图书馆/地方
 tā kàn shū de túshūguǎn/dìfāng
 3rd see book NOM library/place
 “the library/place where he read”

8.3 Cleft sentences

In Chinese, nominalization is also related to cleft and pseudo-cleft sentences (Paris 1979) that are marked by the optional nominalizer *de* at the end of a

sentence. Although cleft sentences are not frequently used, they are, nevertheless, a sentence type that can focus on a certain part of the sentence motivated by communication needs in a given discourse. The examples in (8.8) are various Chinese cleft sentences, also known as *shì* . . . (*de*) constructions (Li and Thompson 1981). This type of sentence emphasizes different parts of an otherwise simple declarative sentence like *tā zuótiān mǎi-le cài* “he bought (some) food yesterday.” Usually the verb to be, *shì*, is placed right in front of the constituent to be emphasized such as *shì zuótiān* “to be yesterday” in (8.8a), *shì mǎi -le cài* “to buy food” in (8.8b), and *shì zài shānjǐngchéng* “to be in Mountain View” in (8.8c). Note that the nominalizer *de* at the end of the sentence is frequently omitted, leaving behind *shì* as the most conspicuous focus marker.

- (8.8) a. 他是昨天买菜的
tā shì zuótiān mǎi cài de
 3rd be yesterday buy vegetable NOM
 “It was yesterday that he bought (some) food.”
- b. 他昨天是买三菜
tā zuótiān shì mǎi -le cài
 3rd yesterday be buy PFV vegetable
 “What he did was to buy food yesterday.”
- c. 他昨天是在山景城买菜的
tā zuótiān shì zài shānjǐngchéng mǎi cài de
 3rd yesterday be at Mountain View buy vegetable NOM
 “It was in Mountain View that he bought food yesterday.”

To emphasize the undergoer that follows the verb, it must be separated from the verb and placed after the verb to be. For example, the verb to be *shì* functions as a link between two equivalent noun phrases such as *zuótiān mǎi de* and *cài* in (8.9b).

- (8.9) a. *他昨天买了是菜的
tā zuótiān mǎi -le shì cài de
 3rd yesterday buy PFV be vegetable NOM
- b. 昨天买的是菜。
zuótiān mǎi de shì cài
 yesterday buy NOM be vegetable
 “It was food that we bought yesterday.”

Still another type of construction that may be called pseudo-cleft construction is shown in the examples in (8.10) in which the focus after the verb to be *shì* appears in the form of a relative clause.

- (8.10) a. 买菜是我们应该做的事。
 mǎi cài shì wǒ-men yīnggāi zuò de shì
 buy vegetable be 1st-PL should do NOM matter
 “Shopping for food is the matter that we should attend to.”
- b. 昨天是我们买菜的时间。
 zuótiān shì wǒ-men mǎi cài de shíjiān
 yesterday be 1st-PL buy vegetable NOM time
 “Yesterday was the time when we bought food.”
- c. 山景城是我买菜的地方。
 Shānjǐngchéng shì wǒ mǎi cài de dìfāng
 Name be 1st buy vegetable REL place
 “Mountain View is the place where I buy food.”

8.4 Adverbials

It was noted in chapter 7 that Chinese adverbs are typically placed immediately in front of the verb in a VP. Some of these adverbs are able to be moved to precede the sentence-initial noun phrase for various pragmatic reasons, but some are fixed. This syntactic property is exhibited by the Chinese adverbial clauses in the following subsections.

8.4.1 *The word order and semantics of some common Chinese adverbs*

Chinese adverbs 也 *yě* “also,” 又 *yòu* “also,” 就 *jiù* “then,” 才 *cái* “then” and 都 *dōu* “all” are non-movable adverbs, with the exception of *jiù*, occurring right in front of the verb after the sentence-initial NP. Furthermore, the semantics of these adverbs are often related to the semantic assumption that might be expected of the constituents of a sentence by the speaker (Biq 1989). For example, *yě* generally points to the similarity between two values that are in contrast in a given context. In (8.11a) the doers, *wǒ* and *tā*, of the activity of *fish eating* are in contrast. But in the rest of the examples in (8.11) different constituents are in contrast, such as the undergoers *fish* and *meat* in (8.11b),

the times *yesterday* and *today* in (8.11c) and the degree of readiness between the two dishes, *fish cooking* and *meat cooking*, in (8.11d).

- (8.11) a. 我吃鱼, 他也吃鱼
 wǒ chī yú, tā yě chī yú
 1st eat fish, 3rd also eat fish
 “I ate fish, and so did he.”
- b. 我吃鱼, 也吃肉
 wǒ chī yú, yě chī ròu
 1st eat fish, also eat meat
 “I ate both fish and meat.”
- c. 他昨天吃鱼, 今天也吃鱼
 tā zuótiān chī yú, jīntiān yě chī yú
 3rd yesterday eat fish, today also eat fish
 “He ate fish yesterday, and he ate fish again today.”
- d. 鱼做好了, 肉也差不多了
 yú zuò-hǎo le, ròu yě chā-bù-duō le
 fish make-good CRS, meat also less-not-more CRS
 “The fish is cooked, and the meat is also about done.”

The examples in (8.12) show a special construction denoting extremity (Big 1989). The constituent inside (*lián*) . . . *yě/dōu* is the focus of the sentence representing a certain extreme value. Note that the parenthesis around *lián* marks it as an optional element, and the slash between *yě/dōu* signals that only one of these is needed in each occurrence. The example in (8.12a) is an emphatic statement of the poor appetite of the doer implying that someone’s appetite is so bad that the person involved does not even want to eat *fish* and *meat* that fall into his extreme category: the kind of food that he likes most. On the other hand, the example in (8.12b) implies that even the doer is a person who is most likely to eat things that other people would be unwilling to eat.

- (8.12) a. 他今天连鱼肉也不想吃
 tā jīntiān lián yú ròu yě bù xiǎng chī
 3rd today even fish meat also not want eat
 “Today he does not even want to eat fish and meat.”

- b. 连他都不想吃
 lián tā dōu bù xiǎng chī
 even 3rd also not want eat
 “Not even he wants to eat.”

As compared to *yě* in the above cases that highlights the similarity of a semantic value, *yòu* depicts the accumulation of relevant properties of the same entity (Biq 1987).

- (8.13) a. 他又来了
 tā yòu lái le
 3rd also come CRS
 “He came again.”
- b. 他来了又来
 tā lái le yòu lái
 3rd come PFV also come
 “He came again and again.”
- c. 他又会唱歌又会跳舞
 tā yòu huì chàng gē yòu huì tiào wǔ
 3rd also can sing song also can jump dance
 “He can sing and dance.”

The semantics of the adverbs *cái* and *jiù* appear to be complementary to each other. Generally speaking, *cái* signals exclusive focusing implying that there is only one situation in which the speaker would agree to go in (8.14b), while *jiù* in (8.14a) marks simple focusing (Biq 1987), implying a general focal point but not an exclusive condition.

- (8.14) a. 你去我就去
 nǐ qù wǒ jiù qù
 2nd go 1st then go
 “I will go if you go.”
- b. 你去我才去
 nǐ qù wǒ cái qù
 “I will go only if you go.”

However, in a different context *cái* such as the one in (8.15b) suggests a sense of lateness of the event that should have taken place sooner. In (8.15a) its implication is simply to focus on the imminence of an activity.

- (8.15) a. 他明天就来。
 tā míngtiān jiù lái
 3rd tomorrow then come
 “He is coming tomorrow.”
- b. 他明天才来。
 tā míngtiān cái lái
 3rd tomorrow then come
 “He will not come until tomorrow.”

In this context, such as the sentence in (8.16) the meaning of lateness is not allowed by the adverb *mǎshàng* “immediately,” only *jiù* that does not imply a focus on lateness can be employed.

- (8.16) a. 我马上就来
 wǒ mǎshàng jiù lái
 1st immediately then come
 “I will come immediately.”
- c. *我马上才来
 wǒ mǎshàng cái lái
 1st immediately then come

Unlike other adverbs in this group, *jiù* as a focus marker can be placed right in front of the constituent in focus such as the pronoun in (8.17a), in front of the PP in (8.17b), or right in front of the verb. The constraint is that it cannot be placed after the main verb of the sentence.

- (8.17) a. 就他从美国来了
 jiù tā cóng měiguó lái le
 then 3rd from USA come CRS
 “Only he (and nobody else) came from the USA.”
- b. 他就从美国来了
 tā jiù cóng měiguó lái le
 3rd then from USA come CRS
 “He will come from the USA soon.”

- c. 他从美国就来了
 tā cóng měiguó jiù lái le
 3rd from USA then come CRS
 “He then came from the USA.”
- d. 他就昨天从美国来了
 tā jiù zuótiān cóng měiguó lái le
 3rd then yesterday from USA come CRS
 “It was yesterday that he came from the USA.”

The position for the adverb *dōu* is fixed to the position immediately preceding the verb of the sentence. However, its scope of modification is backward looking. That is, it can only place a focus on an element preceding it giving rise to a necessary word-order change for a focused constituent that is normally postverbal. The focus is placed on *shéi* in (8.18a), on *zhèxiē huà* in (8.18b), on *wǒ* in (8.18c), and on *shénme huà* in (8.18d), all of which occur before the verb *shuō* in (8.18).

- (8.18) a. 谁都会说这些话!
 shéi dōu huì shuō zhèxiē huà
 who all can say DEM-CL word
 “Anyone can say these words!”
- b. 这些话谁都会说!
 zhèxiē huà shéi dōu huì shuō
 DEM-CL word who all can say
 “These words, anyone can say them!”
- c. 他都说了些什么话?
 tā dōu shuō-le xiē shénme huà
 3rd all say-PFV CL what word
 “What did HE (stress) say?”
- d. 他什么话都说了
 tā shěnmé huà dōu shuō-le
 3rd what word all say-PFV
 “He said everything.”

Other adverbs that have a fixed preverbal position include *lǎo* 老 “always,” *cháng* 常 “often,” and *zuì* 最 “most.” Chinese superlative is expressed through

placing the adverb *zuì* 最 “most” in front of the predicate it modifies such as those in (8.19).

- (8.19) a. 他最贪心
 tā zuì tānxīn
 3rd most greedy
 “He is the most greedy.”
- b. 我们最喜欢中国的小吃
 wǒ-men zuì xǐhuān zhōngguó de xiǎo-chī
 1st-PL most like China REL small-eat
 “We like Chinese (local) delicacies most.”

Adverbs, known as backward-linking adverbs (Li and Thompson 1981), that connect ideas expressed in the preceded clause, are normally placed at the beginning of a sentence. They are *bìngqiě* 并且 “moreover,” *érqiě* 而且 “furthermore,” *kěshì* 可是 “but/however,” *dànshì* 但是 “but/however,” *huòzhě* 或者 “or,” *suǒyǐ* 所以 “therefore,” *yīnwèi* 因为 “because,” etc.

- (8.20) a. 他很聪明, 所以读书读得很好
 tā hěn cōngmíng suǒyǐ dúshū dú de hěn hǎo
 3rd very clever, therefore study-book study POT very good
 “He is very smart; therefore, he studies very well.”
- b. 他很聪明, 但是读书很不努力
 tā hěn cōngmíng dànshì dúshū hěn bù nǔlì
 3rd very clever, but study-book very not effort
 “He is very smart; but he did not work hard (studying).”
- c. 他很聪明, 而且待人又特别好
 tā hěn cōngmíng érqiě dài rén yòu tèbié hǎo
 3rd very clever, furthermore treat people also special good
 “He is very smart; furthermore, he treats people so kindly.”

Some of these adverbs have a more flexible word order, such as *jīngcháng* 经常 “frequently,” *lǎoshì* 老是 “always,” and *háishì* 还是 “nevertheless/still” which can be placed either at the beginning of a sentence or right in front of the verb with a different scope of modification such as the examples in (8.21) demonstrate.

- (8.21) a. 还是你去好
 hái shì nǐ qù hǎo
 still 2nd go good
 “It is still better for YOU to go.”
- b. 你还是去好
 nǐ hái shì qù hǎo
 2nd still go good
 “It is still better for you to go.”

When it is used to form an alternative question, *háishì* means something like “or” in conjoining two clauses such as in (8.22).

- (8.22) 我去好还是不去好
 wǒ qù hǎo hái shì bú qù hǎo
 1st go good or not go good
 “Should I go or not?”

8.4.2 Adverbial clauses

There are three types of adverbial clauses: (i) an adverbial clause with an adverbial connector; (ii) an adverbial clause that appears like a relative clause before the main clause; and (iii) a common adverb that marks both clauses. The semantics of these adverbial clauses are forward-linking (Li and Thompson 1981), commonly corresponding to a backward-linking adverb in the main clause. The connectors of the first type such as those in (8.23) include adverbs like *búdàn* 不但 “although” used together with a backward-linking adverb *érqiě* 而且 “also” in the main clause; *suīrán* 虽然 “although” together with *háishì* 还是 “still” in the main clause; and *yīnwèi* 因为 “because” together with *suǒyǐ* 所以 “therefore.” Note that the examples in (8.23) also show that the adverbial connector can be placed either at the beginning (8.23b) of the sentence or right in front of the VP (8.23a).

- (8.23) a. 他不但很认真, 而且也很努力
 tā bú dàn hěn rèn zhēn, ér qiě yě hěn nǔ lì
 3rd not-only very serious, also also very effort
 “He is not only very serious but also works very hard.”

- b. 不但她很认真, 而且人人都很努力

búdàn tā hěn rènzhēn, érqiě rén-rén dōu hěn nǔlì
 not-only 3rd very serious, also people-people all very effort
 “Not only is she very serious but everyone else also works hard.”

Other connectors like *jìrán* 既然 “since,” *rúguǒ* 如果 “if,” *jiǎrú* 假如 “if,” and *zhǐyào* 只要 “if only,” co-occur with *jiù/yě* 就/也 in the main clause in forming a conditional adverbial clause indicating hypothetical or counterfactual situations.

(8.24)

- a. 你如果不告诉他, 他就不会知道这件事

nǐ rúguǒ bú gàosù tā, tā jiù bú huì zhīdào zhè-jìan shì
 2nd if not tell 3rd, 3rd then not may know DEM-CL matter
 “If you do not tell him, he then may not know this business.”

- b. 如果他不去, 我就没办法了

rúguǒ tā bú qù, wǒ jiù méi bànfa le
 if 3rd not go, 1st then not way CRS
 “If he does not go, I then have no way (to do it).”

The second type renders the adverbials in the form of a NP with a relative clause marked by an adverbial connector, typically used to indicate time (*dāng* 当/*zài* 在) . . . *de shíhòu* 的时候 “when,” (*dāng* 当/*zài* 在) . . . *yǐqián* 以前 “before,” (*dāng* 当/*zài* 在) . . . *yǐhòu* 以后 “after,” as well as conditionals (*rúguǒ* 如果/*jiǎrú* 假如/*zhǐyào* 只要) . . . *de huà* “if.” The adverbial connectors such as *dāng* 当 and *zài* 在 at the beginning of the clause can be deleted.

(8.25)

- a. (当)我回家的时候, 路上出了车祸。

dāng wǒ huí jiā de shíhòu, lù-shàng chū-le chē-huò
 when 1st return home REL time, road-up happen-PFV car-crash
 “When I returned home, (there was) a traffic accident on the road.”

- b. (在)我回家以后, 路上出了车祸。

zài wǒ huí jiā yǐhòu lù-shàng chū-le chē-huò
 at 1st return home after road-up happen-PFV car-crash
 “After I returned home, (there was) a car accident on the road.”

- c. (假如)我回家的话, 你就会不好好工作了
 jiǎrú wǒ huí jiā de huà, nǐ jiù huì bù hǎo-hǎo
 if 1st return home REL word, 2nd then may not good-good
 gōngzuò le
 work CRS
 “If I went home, you would not work very hard.”

The type of adverbial, beginning with a similitude marker such as *tóng* 同/*gēn* 跟/*xiàng* 像 and ending with a nominal-like element such as *yíyàng* 一样/*nàyàng* 那样 in (8.26) *tóng* 同/*gēn* 跟/*xiàng* 像 . . . *yíyàng* 一样/*nàyàng* 那样 ‘like,’ indicates similarity between two entities such as *wǒ-men* ‘we’ and *nǐ* ‘you,’ as shown in (8.26a).

- (8.26) a. 我们跟你一样高兴
 wǒ-men gēn nǐ yíyàng gāoxìng
 2nd-PL with 2nd one-like happy
 “We are just as happy as you.”
- b. 我们没有像你们那样不积极
 wǒ-men méiyǒu xiàng nǐ-men nàyàng bù jījí
 1st-PL NEG like 2nd-PL DEM-like NEG active
 “We are not as inactive as you.”
- c. 跟李四一样, 我们也很不想去
 gēn lǐsì yíyàng, wǒ-men yě hěn bú xiǎng qù
 with Name one-like, 2nd-PL also very NEG want go
 “Just like Lisi, we do not want to go either.”

The third group of adverbials involves two adverbs that must be repeated right in front of the two verbs in the two clauses, such as *yòu* 又 . . . *yòu* 又 . . . ‘both’ (8.27a), *yuè* 越 . . . *yuè* 越 . . . ‘the more . . . the more . . .’ (8.27b) and *yībiān* 一边 . . . *yībiān* 一边 . . . ‘while’ (8.27c).

- (8.27) a. 这篇文章又臭又长
 zhè-piān wénzhāng yòu chòu yòu cháng
 DEM-CL article also stink also long
 “This article is both malodorous and long.”

b. 越看越乏味

yuè kàn yuè fá wèi
more look more lack taste

“The more one reads, the more one becomes bored.”

c. 我只好一边看一边听音乐

wǒ zhǐ hǎo yìbiān kàn yìbiān tīng yīnyuè
1st only good while read while listen music

“I could only read it while listening to music.”

8.5 Serial-verb constructions

Serial-verb constructions refer to sentences that comprise two or more verb phrases in a series, permitted by the Chinese phrase-structure rule: VP → VP VP. However, some of the verbs taking the initial V position are somewhat grammaticalized (i.e., have lost a great deal of verbal properties and changed into a grammatical marker of some kind) and behave less and less like a full verb. The following discussion begins with the initial verbs that behave like full verbs and concludes with those that behave least like verbs.

8.5.1 *Three types of serial-verb constructions*

There are three types of serial-verb construction discussed in this section, one with flexible word order and the other two with rigid word order. The examples in (8.28) show that the placement of the two verb phrases in a series is sometimes flexible (8.28a and b). Such flexibility is accompanied by the possibility for either verb to take a perfective marker *-le* (8.28c and d) or to be negated (8.28e and f).

(8.28) a. 她在厨房里喝咖啡看报

tā zài chúfáng lǐ hē kāfēi kàn bào
3rd at kitchen in drink coffee look paper

“He is drinking coffee and reading the newspaper in the kitchen.”

b. 她在厨房里看报喝咖啡

tā zài chúfáng lǐ kàn bào hē kāfēi
3rd at kitchen in look paper drink coffee

“He is reading the newspaper and drinking coffee in the kitchen.”

- c. 她在厨房里看了报喝咖啡
 tā zài chūfáng lǐ kàn -le bào hē kāfēi
 3rd at kitchen in look PFV paper drink coffee
 “He read the newspaper and drank coffee in the kitchen.”
- d. 她在厨房里看报喝了咖啡
 tā zài chūfáng lǐ kàn bào hē-le kāfēi
 3rd at kitchen in look paper drink-PFV coffee
 “He read the newspaper and drank coffee in the kitchen.”
- e. 她在厨房里不喝咖啡看报
 tā zài chūfáng lǐ bù hē kāfēi kàn bào
 3rd at kitchen in NEG drink coffee look paper
 “He is not drinking coffee and reading the newspaper in the kitchen.”
- f. 她在厨房里喝咖啡不看报
 tā zài chūfáng lǐ hē kāfēi bú kàn bào
 3rd at kitchen in drink coffee NEG look paper
 “He is drinking coffee (but) not reading the newspaper in the kitchen.”

Therefore, the syntactic relationship between the two VPs in this type of serial-verb construction is perhaps parallel to each other.

In the second type of serial-verb construction shown by the examples in (8.29), there is no word-order flexibility, because word order seems to be constrained by the natural order of the sequence of real-world events (8.29a–c). Thus, the relationship between the two verb phrases is not parallel like the first type but is consecutive in nature. Note that the aspect marker can still be affixed to the first verb or the second verb, making clear the verbal status of the two verb phrases in this serial-verb construction. The placement of a perfective marker *-le* may imply that the verb with it, such as *shàng-le* in (8.29a) and *shuì-le* in (8.29b), should then be treated as the main verb of the sentence. It is interesting to note that when the second verb is marked by the perfective marker, the sentence is not complete without the sentence-final *le* indicating a currently relevant state. This type of consecutive serial-verb construction is complemented by the fact that *qù* 去 “to go” and *lái* 来 “to come,” function as purposive markers, which can occur between the two

verb phrases such as in the example in (8.29d). In this case the VP after the purposive *lái* is the focused VP indicating the cause.

- (8.29) a. 他们上了楼睡觉
 tā-men shàng-le lóu shuì jiào
 3rd-PL up-PFV floor sleep
 “They went upstairs to sleep.”
- b. 他们上楼睡了觉了
 tā-men shàng lóu shuì-le jiào le
 3rd-PL up-PFV floor sleep-PFV sleep CRS
 “They went upstairs and slept.”
- c. *他们睡觉上楼
 tā-men shàng lóu shuìjiào
 3rd-PL sleep up-floor
- d. 他们上楼去/来睡觉
 tā-men shàng lóu qù/lái shuìjiào
 3rd-PL up floor go/come sleep
 “They went upstairs in order to sleep.”

The consecutive serial-verb construction normally allows the initial verb to take the progressive marker indicating the common aspectual nature of the VPs in the series. Nevertheless, the second verb cannot normally take the progressive marker alone such as in (8.30b).

- (8.30) a. 爸爸在送姐姐上学
 bàba zài sòng jiějie shàng xué
 father PROG send sister up school
 “Father is sending sister to school.”
- b. *爸爸送姐姐在上学
 bàba sòng jiějie zài shàng xué
 father send sister PROG up school
 “Father sister to school.”

The third type of Chinese serial-verb construction results from a syntactic constraint which does not allow a stative complement to follow the undergoer NP after a transitive verb, thus giving rise to the phenomenon of reduplicating the verb so that it appears that the undergoer NP and the stative complement

each immediately follows a verb. That is, English sentences like *He plays the game well* (8.31a) or *He had the essay done* (8.31b) are not possible in Chinese because the sequences *the game well* or *essay done* are not allowable after a verb. (Note that *de* 得 in (8.31a) is a clitic indicating a potential result.)

- (8.31) a. *他打球得好
 tā dǎ qiú de hǎo
 3rd hit ball get well
 “He played the game well.”
- b. *他写论文好了
 tā xiě lùnwén hǎo le
 3rd write essay write good CRS
 “He had the essay done.”

Instead, in Chinese the verb is duplicated to avoid a sequence of two complements, thus giving rise to a surface serial-verb construction like those in (8.32).

- (8.32) a. 他打球打得好
 tā dǎ qiú dǎ de hǎo
 3rd hit ball hit get well
 “He plays the (ball) game well.”
- b. 他写论文写好了
 tā xiě lùnwén xiě hǎo le
 3rd write essay write good CRS
 “He had done the essay.”

However, perhaps as an exception to such a constraint on verbal complements, verbal reduplication is not necessary if the second complement is a phrase expressing duration, frequency, or a goal such as those in (8.33c and 8.34c). Note that the duration and frequency can either be treated as a modifier (8.33b and 8.34b) of a noun or as a complement of the duplicated verb (8.33a and 8.34a).

- (8.33) a. 他打球打了好几年了
 tā dǎ qiú dǎ le hǎo jǐ nián le
 3rd hit ball hit PFV good several year CRS
 “He has been playing the ball game for several years.”

- b. 他打了好几年的球了
 tā dǎ le hǎo jǐ nián de qiú le
 3rd hit PFV good several year REL ball CRS
 “He has been playing the ball game for several years.”
- c. 他打了球好几年了
 tā dǎ le qiú hǎo jǐ nián le
 3rd hit PFV ball good several year CRS
 “He has been playing the ball game for several years.”

- (8.34) a. 他写论文写了好几次了
 tā xiě lùnwén xiě le hǎo jǐ cì le
 3rd write essay write good several time CRS
 “He has written the essay several times.”
- b. 他写了好几次的论文
 tā xiě le hǎo jǐ cì de lùnwén le
 3rd write PFV good several time REL essay CRS
 “He has written the essay several times.”
- c. 他写了论文好几次了
 tā xiě le lùnwén hǎo jǐ cì le
 3rd write PFV essay good several time CRS
 “He has written the essay several times.”

Once the verb is duplicated, aspect markers can only appear with the second verb of the series such as those in (8.33a) and (8.34a), but not with the first verb as seen in (8.35).

- (8.35) a. *他打了球打好几年了
 tā dǎ le qiú dǎ hǎo jǐ nián le
 3rd hit PFV ball hit good several year CRS
- b. *他写了论文写好几次了
 tā xiě le lùnwén xiě hǎo jǐ cì le
 3rd write essay write good several time CRS

In all of the above examples, the two VPs share a common doer. When the doers of the two VPs vary, the second doer must be marked by a causative marker (see section 8.5.2 for details about the causative) *gěi* 给 “to give,” *ràng* 让 “to let,” *jiào* 叫 “to call,” *qǐng* 请 “to invite,” etc. If the two VPs share a

common undergoer such as *the book* in (8.36a), the undergoer must be omitted after the second verb.

- (8.36) a. 我买本书给他看
 wǒ mǎi běn shū gěi tā kàn
 1st buy CL book give 3rd look
 “I bought a book for him to read.”
- b. 我买本书让他送人
 wǒ mǎi běn shū ràng tā sòng rén
 1st buy CL book let 3rd sent people
 “I bought a book for him to give someone.”

8.5.2 Causative construction

Causative construction is another type of serial-verb construction. Chinese verbs such as *gěi* 给 “to give,” *ràng* 让 “to let,” *jiào* 叫 “to call,” and *qǐng* 请 “to invite,” are full-fledged verbs in modern Chinese (8.37).

- (8.37) a. 他给了我很多东西
 tā gěi -le wǒ hěn duō dōngxi
 3rd give PFV 1st very much stuff
 “He gave me a lot of stuff.”
- b. 他叫了我
 tā jiào-le wǒ
 3rd call-PFV 1st
 “He invited me.”
- c. 他让了我好几分
 tā ràng-le wǒ hǎo jǐ fēn
 3rd let-PFV 1st good several point
 “He yielded several points to me.”

However, these verbs can be used as a sort of causative marker in a serial-verb construction indicating the NP between two verbs functioning simultaneously as the undergoer (or affected) of the initial verb and the doer (or agent) of the second verb such as those in (8.38). Traditionally in Chinese linguistics, this type of construction is known as a pivotal construction. Most can co-occur with an aspect marker like the perfective *-le* in (8.37). However *lìng* 令 “to

order,” *shǐ* 使 “to make,” and *ràng* 让 “to let” cannot, such as in (8.38b), thus giving away the grammatical status of these three as less prototypical verbs than the others in the causative construction.

- (8.38) a. 我昨天请/让/给/叫他看电影
 wǒ zuótiān qǐng/rang/gěi/jiào tā kàn diàn-yǐng
 1st yesterday invite/let/give/call PFV 3rd look electric-shadow
 “I invited/let/allowed/made him (to) watch a film yesterday.”
- b. 我昨天请/*让/给/叫-了他看电影
 wǒ zuótiān qǐng/*ràng/gěi/jiào -le tā kàn diàn-yǐng
 1st yesterday invite/let/allow/invited 3rd look electric-shadow
 “I invited/made him (to) see a movie yesterday.”

8.6 Prepositions

In Chinese, there is no preposition that behaves like the English *in*, *at*, *on*, *over*, *toward*, *etc.* that generally do not have a nominal or verbal function. Nearly all Chinese prepositions can be used as full-fledged verbs, motivating some (e.g. Li and Thompson 1981) to call them coversbs instead of prepositions.

Chinese prepositions are all originally the first verbs in a series that have been changed into grammatical markers signaling various semantic functions of the non-arguments. Syntactically, they behave like an adverbial modifying the following VP, i.e. VP → PP VP. However, not all the PPs are the same as some have more word-order flexibility than others.

8.6.1 Flexible prepositional phrases

All of the prepositions that can be placed either at the beginning of a sentence in (8.39) or immediately before the main verb of a sentence in (8.40) are included in this section such as *yòng* 用 “with” indicating instrumental case, *tì* 替 “for” indicating benefactive case, and *gēn* 跟 “with” indicating associative case.

- (8.39) a. 我用把小刀打开了信封
 wǒ yòng bǎ xiǎo dāo dǎkāi -le xìn-fēng
 1st use CL small knife open -PFV letter-close
 “I opened the envelope with a small knife.”

- b. 他替你做了很多事

tā tì nǐ zuò-le hěn duō shì
 3rd replace 2nd do-PFV very much things
 “He did many things for you.”

- c. 我跟你去中国

wǒ gēn nǐ qù zhōngguó
 1st follow you go China
 “I will go to China with you.”

- (8.40) a. 用把小刀我打开了信封

yòng bǎ xiǎo dāo wǒ dǎkāi -le xìn-fēng
 use CL small knife 1st open-PFV letter-close
 “I opened the envelope with a small knife.”

- b. 替你他做了很多事

tì nǐ tā zuò -le hěn duō shì
 replace 2nd 3rd do-PFV very much things
 “He did many things for you.”

- c. 跟她我去过中国

gēn tā wǒ qù -guò zhōngguó
 follow 3rd 1st go-EXP China
 “I went to China with her.”

The fundamental structural function of these prepositions is to add a non-argument before the main verb of a sentence, VP → PP VP. Many of these prepositions can still function as a verb in simple sentences (8.41). For this reason, some linguists treat these prepositions as coverbs instead (Li and Thompson 1981).

- (8.41) a. 他的文章用了很多典故

tā de wénzhāng yòng-le hěn duō diǎngù
 3rd REL article use-PFV very much quotation
 “His article made use of many literary quotations.”

- b. 教练让张三替了李四

jiàoliàn ràng zhāngsān tì -le lǐsì
 coach let name replace PFV name
 “The coach let Zhangsan substitute for Lisi.”

- c. 我就跟着你

wǒ jiù gēn-zhe nǐ
 1st then follow-IMP 2nd
 “I will then follow you.”

Even though many of these prepositions cannot take on aspectual markers like the verbs in a serial-verb construction, some of them can form frozen preposition-like compounds. This type of sentence has an aspect marker that functions as a fused element such as the imperfective marker *-zhe* in *gēn-zhe* 跟着 “with,” *yán-zhe* 沿着 “along,” *àn-zhe* 按着 “according to,” and the perfective marker *-le* in *wèi-le* 为了 “for,” etc. in (8.42).

- (8.42) a. 我跟着你去中国

wǒ gēn-zhe nǐ qù zhōngguó
 1st follow-IMP 2nd go China
 “I will go to China with you.”

- b. 他为了孩子浪费了很多钱

tā wèi-le hái-zǐ làngfèi-le hěn duō qián
 3rd do-PFV child waste-PFV very much money
 “He wasted a lot of money on the children.”

- c. 我们沿着海边散步

wǒ-men yán-zhe hǎi-biān sàn bù
 1st-PL trim-IMP sea-edge walk
 “We walk along the seashore.”

- d. 我只好按着老板的意思从头再做一遍

wǒ zhǐhǎo àn-zhe lǎobǎn de yìsì cóng tóu zài
 1st only follow-IMP boss REL meaning from head again
 zuò yí biàn
 do one CL
 “I could only redo (the project) in accordance with the boss’s opinion.”

Some additional members of this group are: *gěi* 给 “for,” *duì* 对 “toward,” *wǎng* 往 “toward,” *xiàng* 向 “toward,” *cháo* 朝 “toward,” *cóng* 从 “from,” and *yóu* 由 “from.”

Normally, the negators of the VPs like *bù* or *méiyǒu* can either immediately precede the prepositions such as (8.43a) and (8.43c) or follow the PP, but before the verb, such as (8.43b) and (8.43d). In the latter case the negation of the verb is more emphatic.

- (8.43) a. 我没有用刀切西瓜
 wǒ méiyǒu yòng dāo qiē xīguā
 1st NEG with knife cut watermelon
 “I did not cut the watermelon with a knife.”
- b. 我用刀没有切西瓜
 wǒ yòng dāo méiyǒu qiē xīguā
 1st with knife NEG cut watermelon
 “I did not cut the watermelon with a knife.”
- c. 他不给我写信
 tā bù gěi wǒ xiě xìn
 3rd NEG for 1st write letter
 “He has not written any letters to me.”
- d. 他给我从来不写信
 tā gěi cónglái wǒ bù xiě xìn
 3rd for 1st forever NEG write letter
 “He never writes any letters to me.”

8.6.2 *The comparative, passive, and bǎ constructions*

In addition to the similarity of having a verbal origin like the above prepositions, the constructions discussed in this section differ from those in section 8.5.2 for their inflexible word order. They must immediately precede the VP but must follow the optional NP at the beginning of a sentence. Moreover, their constraints on negation demonstrate that they are more closely connected to the following verbs than the prepositions in the last section.

8.6.2.1 *Comparative*

The Chinese comparative is marked by *bǐ* 比 which is placed right in front of the standard it is to be compared with. For example, *tā* in (8.44a) is used as the standard against which *nǐ* is compared. Furthermore, this preposition is

not movable (8.44b) like those in section 8.6.1 above and must be placed right in front of the VP. It can only be used as a verb in modern Chinese meaning “to compare/match” such as the one in (8.44d).

- (8.44) a. 你比他高
 nǐ bǐ tā gāo
 2nd compare 3rd tall
 “You are taller than him.”
- b. *比他你高
 bǐ tā nǐ gāo
 compare 3rd 2nd tall
- c. 他比你听话
 tā bǐ nǐ tīng-huà
 3rd compare 2nd listen-word
 “He heeds advice better than you.”
- d. 你跟他没法比
 nǐ gē tā měi fǎ bǐ
 2nd with 3rd Neg. way compare
 “In no way can you be compared to him.” Or “In no way can you match him.”

Furthermore, negators like *bù* or *méi(yǒu)* are placed in front of the comparative preposition but cannot precede the verb immediately such as the one in (8.45c), unless the verb is further marked by an adverb *gèng* 更 “even more” such as in (8.45d).

- (8.45) a. 他不比你听话
 tā bù bǐ nǐ tīng-huà
 3rd NEG compare 2nd listen-word
 “He does not heed advice better than you.”
- b. 他没有比你听话
 tā méiyǒu bǐ nǐ tīng-huà
 3rd NEG compare 2nd listen-word
 “He has not heeded advice better than you.”
- c. *他比你听话
 tā bǐ nǐ bù tīng-huà
 3rd compare 2nd NEG listen-word

- d. 他比你更不听话

tā bǐ nǐ gèng bù tīng-huà

3rd compare 2nd even-more NEG listen-word

“He heeds advice even worse than you.”

8.6.2.2 *Passive*

A preposition is commonly placed in front of a doer/agent as the indicator of passive voice in Chinese. The most common prepositional, passive marker is *bèi* 被 as shown in (8.46a), although many Chinese causative markers such as 让 *ràng* “to let,” 给 *gěi* “to give,” and 叫 *jiào* “to call” can be used interchangeably like in the examples in (8.46). *Bèi* 被, unlike other passive markers, a verb meaning “to suffer/to receive” in Old Chinese, has practically lost all of its ability to function as a verb in modern Chinese (Sun 1996). Furthermore, the Chinese passive of one of these markers almost always implies a sense of adversity, or misfortune.

- (8.46) a. 弟弟天天都被妈妈骂

dìdì tiān-tiān dōu bèi māma mà

brother day-day all PASS mother scold

“Little brother is scolded by mother every day.”

- b. 他昨天让老师批评了

tā zuótiān ràng lǎoshī pīpíng le

3rd yesterday let teacher criticize CRS

“He was criticized by the teacher yesterday.”

- c. 这小孩怎么老给人家欺负

zhè xiǎo-hái zěme lǎo gěi rénjiā qīfù

DEM little-child how always give other bully

“How come this child is always bullied by the others?”

- d. 我又叫同学笑了

wǒ yòu jiào tóng-xué xiào le

1st again call common-study laugh CRS

“I was laughed at by fellow students again.”

- e. 我又被笑了

wǒ yòu bèi xiào le

1st again PASS laugh CRS

“I was laughed at by fellow students again.”

The sentence in (8.46e) shows that *bèi* 被 and *gěi* 给, unlike the other passive markers such as *jiào* 叫 and *ràng* 让, can occur without an object in front of the verb, thus behaving less like a preposition and more like a passive particle.

Negators such as *měi*-(*yǒu*) 没有 or *bù* 不 can only occur before the passive marker.

- (8.47) a. 他不再叫同学笑了
 tā bú zài jiào tóng-xué xiào le
 3rd NEG call common-study laugh CRS
 “He was no longer laughed at by fellow students.”
- b. 他昨天没有被妈妈骂
 tā zuótiān méiyǒu bèi māma mà
 3rd yesterday NEG PASS mother scold
 “Little brother was not scolded by mother yesterday.”

8.6.2.3 *The bǎ construction*

The functions of the Chinese *bǎ* 把 construction are a much-debated topic in Chinese linguistics and encompass many different views (Huang, Li, and Li 2004, Li and Thompson 1981, Liu 1997, Sun 1997). There is not another language in the world that has a phenomenon similar to the *bǎ* construction. *Bǎ* was originally used as a verb meaning “to hold/to take” in Middle Chinese. Although in modern Chinese it retains this original function only in some idiomatic expressions such as the examples in (8.48), it has changed into a preposition-like element that has some co-occurrence constraints on the following noun and predicate which often puzzle linguists and students of Chinese.

- (8.48) a. 把住车把喽!
 bǎ -zhù chē-bǎ lóu
 hold-stay car-handle CRS+FW
 “Hold car-handle tightly!”
- b. 今天我把门
 jīntiān wǒ bǎ mén
 today 1st hold door
 “I (will) guard the door today.”

As a preposition, it takes up the syntactic position with a nominal before the verb resembling the comparative *bǐ* 比 and the passive *bèi* 被. However, a comprehensive review of various theories and related issues that have been proposed in the field will lead us far beyond the scope of an introductory book on Chinese linguistics. In what follows, the focus will be on some of the distributional constraints of the *bǎ* construction. The primary function of the *bǎ* construction is to signal a change of state resulting from some activity. There are also some other derived uses that require the verb to be overtly marked to signal that the event is ended.

This construction can be traced back to some of the uses of the Old Chinese *yǐ* 以 involving sentences with three arguments that resemble the modern Chinese sentences in (8.49). The nominal in (8.49a) *yī-běn shū* “a book” is affected, resulting from its being torn into two pieces. A third person *tā* in (8.49b) is, perhaps mistakenly, taken to be a good person. In (8.49c), *rénqíng* “favor” as a generic noun is taken by someone to be an important matter. All of the nominals marked by *bǎ* can be taken as some kind of undergoer affected by the event.

- (8.49) a. 他把一本书撕成两半
 tā bǎ yī-běn shū sī-chéng liǎng bàn
 3rd take one-CL book tear-form two half
 “He tore a book into two pieces.”
- b. 我把他当作是好人
 wǒ bǎ tā dāngzuò shì hǎo-rén
 1st take 3rd regard be good-person
 “I took him to be a good person.”
- c. 他把人情看得很重
 tā bǎ rénqíng kàn de hěn zhòng
 3rd take favors see get very heavy
 “He considers favors to be very important.”

This three-argument structure constitutes the basis for the newer modern Chinese two-argument *bǎ* construction that indicates a resultant state without the argument position after the verb. The major features of the construction consist of three related phenomena: (i) the nominal after *bǎ* is typically an affected undergoer; (ii) the nominal after *bǎ* must be semantically specific

(8.49a, 8.50a), generic (8.49c), or definite (8.49b, 8.50b); and (iii) the predicate of the event must indicate a change of state and, for this reason, a verb without implying an end of the event is not allowed. Phenomenon (ii) of the *bǎ* construction does not allow the nominal after *bǎ* to be non-specific. For example, the sentences in (8.50a) have a transitive verb *mǎi* 买 “to buy” that is subcategorized for two arguments which do not allow a non-specific NP after *bǎ*. Following Tsao’s (1987) hypothesis that *bǎ* is a topic marker that is correlated to shared information of the speaker and hearer at the moment of speech, the ungrammatical sentence in (8.50a) can then be explained in terms of the general property of a non-specific NP that typically refers to an entity that is not already shared by the speaker/hearer. That is, it is practically impossible to use the *bǎ* sentence to indicate a change of state involving something that does not exist in a given discourse. Whereas the non-*bǎ* sentence in (8.49b) allows a non-specific NP *a book* as the undergoer of the event, the *bǎ* sentence with the same nominal in (8.50a) is incorrect because it is not a topic shared by the speaker and hearer. Furthermore, if the bare noun *shū* “book” in (8.50c) is interpreted as definite like the one marked by a demonstrative in (8.50d), the *bǎ* sentence becomes grammatically acceptable.

- (8.50) a. *他把一本书买了
 tā bǎ yì-běn shū mǎi le
 3rd take one-CL book buy CRS
- b. 他买了一本书了
 tā mǎi-le yì-běn shū le
 3rd buy-PFV one-CL book buy CRS
 “He bought a book.”
- c. 他把书买了
 tā bǎ shū mǎi le
 3rd take book buy PFV
 “He bought that book.”
 “*He buys books.”
- d. 他把那本书买了
 tā bǎ nà-běn shū mǎi le
 3rd take DEM-CL book buy PFV
 “He bought that book.”

Note that the *bǎ*-sentence in (8.50c), though grammatically correct, still does not allow an indefinite reading such as **He buys books*. Once again, the explanation follows from its function in marking the change of state resulting from the action of the event on a given entity, i.e., in this case, *the book*. The referential constraint signifies that the referent of the nominal marked by *bǎ* must exist in the discourse, because it makes no sense to present a resultative state of an entity that does not exist in the discourse.

The sentences in (8.51) show that a sense of total affectedness of the under-goer can be manifest as a necessary completion of the event, thus a change of state. In (8.51a), the *bǎ*-sentence imposes the necessary completion of the event of *drinking the soup*. Therefore, the cancellation of such an implication by the sentence *kěshì méi hē wán* “but (he) did not finish (it)” in (8.51a) leads to a grammatically incorrect sequence. On the other hand, the example in (8.51b) shows that such a cancellation is possible for a non-*bǎ*-sentence, as, like the *bǎ* construction, it does not contain the same implication of necessary completion.

- (8.51) a. *他把汤喝了, *可是没喝完
 tā bǎ tāng hē le, kěshì méi hē wán
 3rd take soup drink CRS, but NEG drink finish
- b. 他喝了汤了, 可是没喝完
 tā hē le tāng le, kěshì méi hē wán
 3rd drink PFV soup CRS, but NEG drink finish
 “He drank the soup, but he did not finish it.”

Although the *bǎ* construction originally requires the predicate of a *bǎ*-sentence to be semantically bounded by a resultative state, in modern Chinese there appears a derived use in which the predicate is simply bounded by a perfect marker (or CRS) or a counter. The end of the sentence in (8.52a) is explicitly signaled by the perfect-aspect marker *-le*, thus indicating a new state resulting from the implementation of the event. The sentence in (8.52b) is ungrammatical because such a resulting state is unavailable with a progressive marker *zài* which focuses on the ongoing state of an activity rather than reaching the endpoint of an event. The sentence in (8.52c) is acceptable because the phrase, *onto the bookshelf*, provides the destination point of the movement of the theme, *book*, as the resulting location. The example of

(8.52d) with the event with a counter *yī* “one,” *took a brief look*, describes a certain state of affairs that is bounded, i.e., a brief look necessarily includes an initial point and an endpoint. The sentence in (8.52e), representing the most common type of the modern *bǎ* construction (Zhang 2002: 35) with a resultative compound *kàn-wán* 看完 read-finish “to finish reading” also contains a resulting state *finishing reading*.

- (8.52) a. 他把书看了
 tā bǎ shū kàn le
 3rd take book see CRS
 “He read the book.”
- b. *他把书在看
 tā bǎ shū zài kàn
 3rd take book PROG see
- c. 他把书放到书架上
 tā bǎ shū fàng dào shū-jià shàng
 3rd take book place arrive book-shelf up
 “He placed the book onto the bookshelf.”
- d. 他把书一放就走了
 tā bǎ shū yí fàng jiù zǒu le
 3rd take book one release then walk PFV
 “He let the book go and left (immediately).”
- e. 你把书看完
 nǐ bǎ shū kàn-wán
 2nd take book see-finish
 “You finish reading the book.”

However, it is necessary to note that even though the event *play the Blue Danube* necessarily contains an event with an endpoint, the sentence in (8.53a) is still not acceptable. The reason is perhaps due to the fact that the predicate is composed of a non-resultative compound *yǎn-zòu* play-play “to play.” In this case, an additional marking such as the perfect marker *-le* in (8.53b) indicating a newly attained situation, i.e., a change of state is then attained.

- (8.53) a. *乐队把蓝色多瑙河演奏
 yuè-duì bǎ lán-sè duōnǎo-hé yǎn-zòu
 music team take blue-color Name-river play-play
- b. 乐队把蓝色多瑙河演奏了
 yuè-duì bǎ lán-sè duōnǎo-hé yǎn-zòu le
 music team take blue-color Name-river play-play CRS
 “The orchestra played the *Blue Danube*.”

In short, the sentence with a *bǎ* construction usually has a predicate that implies a resultant state that is temporally bounded by an endpoint. The examples in (8.54) are some additional sentences showing how the *bǎ* construction differs from the Chinese sentences without *bǎ*. In (8.54a), there is a transitive verb *bō* “to peel” that takes up three arguments, *they*, *orange*, and *skin*. Although it seems to have non-*bǎ* alternatives, the awkwardness of the alternatives given in (8.54b) and (8.54d) suggests that the *bǎ* sentences of this kind are not equivalent to their non-*bǎ* alternatives.

- (8.54) a. 他们把橘子剥了皮
 tā-men bǎ júzi bō -le pí
 3rd-PL take orange peel PFV skin
 “They peeled the skin off the orange.”
- b. ?他们剥橘子剥了皮
 tā-men bō júzi bō -le pí
 3rd-PL peeled orange peel PFV skin
 “They peel the skin off the orange.”
- c. 教练把球队分成两半
 jiào-liàn bǎ qiú-duì fēn-chéng liǎng bàn
 teach-train take ball-group divide-form two half
 “The coach divided the team into two halves.”
- d. ?教练分球队分成两组
 jiào-liàn fēn qiú-duì fēn-chéng liǎng bàn
 teach-train divide ball-group divide-form two half
 “The coach divided the team into two halves.”

Still another kind of the *bǎ* construction involves verbal compounds with two intransitive verbs, such as *kū-hóng* cry-red in (8.55) that clearly

demonstrate that the *bǎ* sentence is not directly derived from a non-*bǎ* sentence as the undergoer *yǎnjīng* “eyes” after *bǎ* cannot be an argument sub-categorized as an undergoer by intransitive verbs like *kū* “to cry,” *hóng* “(become) red.”

- (8.55) 他把眼睛都哭紅了
 tā bǎ yǎnjīng dōu kū-hóng le
 3rd take eye all cry-red CRS
 “He cried (so much) that his eyes are all red.”

8.7 Summary

This chapter has provided a brief description of various Chinese verb phrases in relation to Chinese phrase-structural rules and the word-order variations triggered by pragmatic needs. Chinese nominalization involves the formation of noun phrases relating to the clitic, relative marker *de* 的, noun-phrase modification, relative clauses, cleft sentences and pseudo-cleft sentences. Additionally, the importance of adverbials functioning to modify a VP, or a sentence, was discussed. Serial-verb construction which relates to Chinese verb phrases in series has no morphological marking such as the English infinitive *to*. Some of the serial-verb constructions are parallel in nature as their relatively free word order suggests, although others are ordered consecutively. The Chinese prepositional phrases that arise from the serial-verb constructions are usually of different kinds because of their different word-order constraints. Whereas some of these constructions can be placed at either the beginning of the sentence or right in front of the VPs, some have rigid word-order because of their closer tie with the verbs that follow them, and function as the main predicate of the sentence.

Furthermore, members of given lexical categories may have different word orders and morphologies depending on their grammatical properties and various discourse factors. A more comprehensive coverage of word-order flexibility and the theoretical significance and related issues of these phenomena calls for a deeper discussion of various theories and further analyses of Chinese structures. However, given the goal and the limit on the length of this book, interested readers who desire a more detailed description of these constructions should refer to the books and articles given in the reading list. It is hoped

that the current chapter has provided some useful information for students of the Chinese language and a start for those who would like to develop a deeper understanding of Chinese grammar.

FURTHER READING

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Appendix 1 Phonetic symbols

All symbols have been taken from the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA).

1.1 Consonants

IPA	Description	Pīnyīn (Standard Chinese spelling system)
[p]	unaspirated bilabial voiceless plosive	b
[p ^h]	aspirated bilabial voiceless plosive	p
[m]	bilabial nasal	m
[f]	labio-dental voiceless fricative	f
[t]	alveolar unaspirated voiceless plosive	d
[t ^h]	alveolar aspirated voiceless plosive	t
[n]	alveolar nasal	n
[l]	alveolar lateral	l
[ts]	dental unaspirated voiceless affricate	z
[ts ^h]	dental aspirated voiceless affricate	c
[s]	voiceless dental fricative	s
[tʂ]	unaspirated voiceless retroflex	zh
[tʂ ^h]	aspirated voiceless retroflex	ch
[ʂ]	voiceless retroflex	sh
[ɹ]	voiceless postalveolar approximant	r
[tʃ]	unaspirated palatal affricate	j
[tʃ ^h]	aspirated palatal affricate	q
[ç]	palatal fricative	x
[k]	unaspirated velar voiceless plosive	g
[k ^h]	aspirated velar voiceless plosive	k
[x]	velar fricative	h
[ŋ]	velar nasal	ng

1.2 Vowels

IPA	Description	Pīnyīn (Standard Chinese spelling system)
[a]	low-front open	a
[ɛ]	front mid	e
[ə]	central mid	e
[o]	mid-back rounded	o
[ɪ]	high front	i/yi
[u]	high-back rounded	u/wu
[y]	high-front rounded	ü/yu

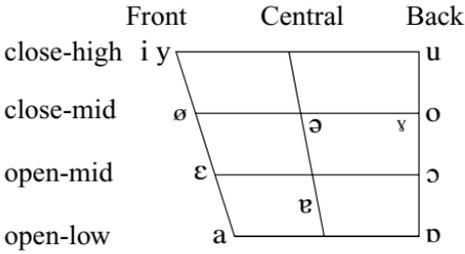
1.3 Tone marks (placed above a vowel)

Pitch	description	pitch values
-	high-level tone	55
ˊ	high-rising tone	35
ˇ	low-rising tone	214
ˋ	falling tone	51
˜	nasalization	

1.4 Additional IPA symbols used to describe various sounds that do not exist in Standard Chinese

IPA	Description
[ʃ]	postalveolar fricative
[ʔ]	glottal plosive
[ɔ]	mid-back rounded vowel
[ɣ]	mid-back vowel
[ø]	mid-front rounded vowel
[ɐ]	low-central vowel
[ɒ]	low-back rounded vowel

1.5 A phonetic chart of the symbols representing Chinese vowels used in this book



[y, ø, u, o, ɔ, ɒ] represent rounded vowels, i.e., with lip-rounding in pronunciation. The features *close* vs. *open* refer to the degree of the opening of the mouth in pronunciation.

Appendix 2 Capitalized abbreviations

AD	adverb
ADJ	adjective
ADV	adverbial phrase
ASP	aspect
AUX	auxiliary
BA	a special Chinese preposition
C	consonant
CL	classifier
CRS	currently relevant state
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DIM	diminutive
DP	determiner phrase
EX	expected (to be confirmed positively)
EXP	experiential aspect
F	final endpoint
FW	friendly warning
I	initial endpoint
IMP	imperfective aspect
INC	inchoative
M	medial
N	nasal consonant or noun, depending on context
NCL	numeral classifier
NEG	negative
NOM	nominal
NP	noun phrase
NUM	numeral
O	syntactic object
PASS	passive particle

PFV	perfective marker
PL	plural
POS	possessive
POT	potential
PP	prepositional phrase
PREP	preposition
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive aspect
PRT	particle
Q	question particle
REL	relative marker
RF	reduce forcefulness
S	a clause
SA	solicit agreement
SUF	suffix
V	vowel or verb, depending on context
VP	verb phrase
VV	diphthong

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